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# REFORM AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN EASTERN EUROPE

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## REPORT

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## CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

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## U.S. COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

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# CONTENTS


| | Page |
|---|---|
| LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| THE CONTEXT: PATTERNS OF NATIONAL INTEREST | 5 |
| The East European Perspective | 5 |
| Soviet Interests | 6 |
| Expression of East European National Interests | 9 |
| The Balance Sheet | 11 |
| ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REFORM | 13 |
| The Economic Environment | 15 |
| Country-by-Country Economic Reform Efforts | 17 |
| Political Reform | 25 |
| RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS | 31 |
| General Trends | 31 |
| Regime Initiatives | 31 |
| Political Prisoners | 33 |
| Human Rights Activism | 34 |
| Trans-Border Cooperation | 43 |
| Religious Rights | 44 |
| Ethnic and Cultural Rights | 47 |
| HUMAN CONTACTS | 49 |
| Region-Wide Trends | 49 |
| Emigration and Family Reunification | 49 |
| Binational Marriage | 53 |
| Family Visits and Travel | 54 |
| Travel and Tourism to Eastern Europe | 57 |
| CULTURAL POLICIES AND THE MEDIA | 59 |
| Overview | 59 |
| Media Policies | 63 |
| Treatment of Foreign Journalists | 71 |
| Cultural Policies | 73 |
| CONCLUSION | 80 |
| APPENDIX I | 83 |
| APPENDIX II | 84 |

# LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

During the course of the last several years, tremendous political changes have occurred in Eastern Europe.[1] On the plus side of the ledger, the United States normalized relations with Poland, symbolized by the reinstatement of Poland's Most-Favored-Nation trading status (MFN) in 1987, following a series of prisoner amnesties and political improvements peaking in 1986. In Hungary, progress has included the introduction of a new passport law, undoubtedly the most liberal in Eastern Europe to date, permitting passport issuance according to roughly the same standards as in the West. In the German Democratic Republic, record numbers of people have been permitted to travel and to emigrate.

On the negative side of the ledger, to mention only the most striking case of deterioration, United States relations with Romania have chilled because of that country's progressively poorer human rights performance. This led Romania to renounce its MFN privileges rather than face what promised to be a highly critical assessment before the U.S. Congress in 1988. In spite of worldwide condemnation of its policies, Romania has forged ahead with plans to destroy up to half of its approximately 13,000 villages.

All this is painted onto domestic political and economic canvases which can seem alternately diverse and yet uniform, capable of metamorphosis and yet stagnant. In spite of the notable changes, there are few discernible area-wide trends in this geographic region united by its postwar fate.

It is no wonder, then, that East European analysts have been left scratching their heads, trying to make sense out of all that is happening, or—in some cases—not happening. One of the traditional questions posed by these analysts involves the degree of influence events in the Soviet Union have on developments in Eastern Europe. The latest angle in this sophisticated guesswork has become the question of what role Mikhail Gorbachev performs in Eastern Europe's own passion play.

Since World War II, Europe from the Baltic to the Black Sea has been the victim of push-me, pull-you politics emanating from Moscow: now racing to catchup with de-Stalinization, now being punished for taking de-Stalinization too far. Today's Eastern Europe seems to continue to walk a poorly defined path between being reactive to events in the Soviet Union, and proactively leading the way to parts unknown. Understanding the changes taking place in the region—and the opportunities for the West which have

[1]For the purposes of this report, Eastern Europe refers to the Warsaw Pact countries minus the Soviet Union; i.e., Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Romania.

arisen as a result of them—may be more critical now than at any time since the end of World War II.

Consequently, the Helsinki Commission has followed developments in Eastern Europe more closely during the past Congress than ever before. Extensive hearings[2] have been held on virtually every aspect of the Helsinki Accords as they apply to Eastern Europe, drawing on a wide range of experts on East European affairs, including renowned scholars, high-ranking government officials, representatives from nongovernmental organizations, and East Europeans speaking from their firsthand experiences.

In addition, the Commission has led congressional delegations to all six East European countries.[3] These unprecedented trips provided Helsinki Commissioners and other Members of Congress with the opportunity to engage government officials in a dialogue on all aspects of the Helsinki Final Act, and to exchange views regarding specific areas of bilateral and multilateral concern. Just as important were delegation meetings with a wide range of private citizens, representing independent and unofficial thinking among the political, religious, and cultural communities. Commission staff delegations to Poland, Romania, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia have performed important follow-up activities.

The report that follows is based on the information garnered by the Commission's numerous hearings, delegations, and reports. It is an attempt to take that information one step further and, like THE GORBACHEV RECORD[4] which precedes it, present a sober, factual analysis of trends in the countries of Eastern Europe. It is hoped that, as a result, we will better understand where and in what ways positive change is taking place in Eastern Europe, and where compliance with the Helsinki Final Act cries for improvement.

SINCERELY,

STENY H. HOYER
*Chairman*

DENNIS DECONCINI
*Cochairman*

DON RITTER
*Ranking Minority House Member*

ALFONSE D'AMATO
*Ranking Minority Senate Member*

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[2]For a list of Commission hearings on Eastern Europe, see Appendix I.
[3]See Appendix 2.
[4]U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, REFORM AND HUMAN RIGHTS THE GORBACHEV RECORD (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1988).

# INTRODUCTION

Since the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev to power in March 1985, Kremlinologists have been forced to scramble as the relatively predictable still life which for so many years represented the Soviet Union has suddenly become a quickly changing kaleidoscope. That Gorbachev is a dramatically different kind of Soviet leader than the world has seen since the days of Lenin is not in dispute; what remains hotly debated among the experts are, first and foremost, Gorbachev's true motives and, second, the final results of his ambitious attempts to reform the gigantic, unwieldy Soviet system.

East Europeanists have, perhaps, a somewhat easier time of assessing upheavals and reversals, as theirs is a region notorious for spurts of change and instability. While in the 1960's and 1970's the Soviet Union became more and more stultified, East European nations attempted—and sometimes succeeded—in forging some independence along the margins of the Soviet-dominated alliance. Czechoslovakia in 1968 represents the most poignant attempt to achieve real democracy in those margins—an attempt brutally crushed by Soviet-led forces. Romania in 1988 stands as a pathetic reminder that independence from the Soviet Union does not always translate into greater democracy.

Nevertheless, East Europeanists are finding it as challenging to assess the impact of the Gorbachev regime on the other six countries of the Warsaw Pact as their Sovietologist counterparts are to evaluate changes from Riga to Yerevan. Here, as with the Soviet Union, speculation abounds. Former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski has described Eastern Europe as a "region of potentially explosive instability, with five countries already in a classic prerevolutionary situation . . . a spark could set off a major explosion."[1] In contrast, journalist Timothy Garton Ash has suggested that "strikes and street demonstrations . . . are an entirely normal part of political and public life in our own countries," and that only alarmists see such events in Eastern Europe as a recipe for revolution rather than an ingredient of reform.[2]

In May 1988, the Helsinki Commission published a staff report, REFORM AND HUMAN RIGHTS THE GORBACHEV RECORD. As an evaluation of the first 3 years under Gorbachev, that report focused on the impact of *perestroika* and *glasnost* on human rights in the Soviet Union. This volume extends that examination to the impact of the Soviet reform efforts on Eastern Europe.

Specifically, this report will look at the following:

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[1]Zbigniew Brzezinski, *America's New Geostrategy*, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 66, No. 4 (1988), p. 686.
[2]Timothy Garton Ash, *The Empire in Decay*, THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS, September 29, 1988.

- As the context in which domestic events must be evaluated, what is the relationship between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe?
- Are the economic and political reforms proposed in the Soviet Union mirrored in Eastern Europe?
- What is the status of compliance with the human rights commitments guaranteed by the Principles section of the Helsinki Final Act?
- Are the most important elements of the human contacts section of the Helsinki Final Act—free flow of people and ideas—undergoing improvements, stagnation, or reversals?

While the timeframe of this study roughly corresponds with the rise of Gorbachev to power, commentary frequently delves back further in time, as many recent changes in Eastern Europe have their roots in events wholly separate from developments in the Soviet Union. As the Poles are fond of pointing out, even under Brezhnev they had a legal independent trade union, Solidarity, for 1½ years.

# THE CONTEXT: PATTERNS OF NATIONAL INTEREST

Since the end of World War II, expression of East European national interests has been shaped by the overlay of Soviet influence and interests in the region. As William Griffith has suggested, "Eastern Europe" is a political, not a historic, concept: what we call Eastern Europe is what the Soviet Army conquered in World War II and what Stalin then was able to bring under the USSR's control but not incorporate into the USSR itself.[1] Hence Eastern Europe consists of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. It includes neither the neutral states of Austria, Finland and Yugoslavia, nor the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that were forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union.

Soviet influence is predominant. Large Soviet military units will remain in Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary and Poland even after the withdrawal of 50,000 soldiers and 5,000 tanks announced by Mikhail Gorbachev in December 1988. Soviet forces based in the Western Military District of the USSR can quickly deploy westward. The Soviet Union is the largest single trading partner for each East European country and the chief supplier of energy to the region.

Many East European leaders, military as well as civilian, have been educated and trained in the USSR. All East European regimes profess to be Marxist-Leninist and recognize, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, that the wellspring of Marxism-Leninism is in Moscow. Indeed, the East European Communist Parties enjoy a monopoly of political power ostensibly because as Marxist-Leninists they are uniquely qualified to lead their respective societies from capitalism, through "socialism," to full communism, the "most perfect" domestic order. (From this doctrinal claim comes the bitterly ironic East European joke that socialism is in actuality a difficult historical stage between capitalism and capitalism).

## The East European Perspective

Given the wide divergencies among the regimes and peoples of Eastern Europe, it would be misleading to imply a single outlook in the region. Each of the six countries is different from the others in such basic measures as language, history, culture, tradition and level of economic development. Each has a distinctive relationship

[1]William E. Griffith, *Eastern Europe and United States Policy,* in UNITED STATES-SOVIET RELATIONS: BUILDING A CONGRESSIONAL CADRE, Dick Clark, ed. (Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, Wye Plantation, 1986).

between its official regime and its society, between the rulers and the ruled.

The gap is most pronounced in Poland, for instance, where the popularity of the church and the unpopularity of Russia has set most of society apart from the Marxist-Leninist, Soviet-oriented regime. It is relatively small in Bulgaria, where the Church is less dominant and Russia is seen as a historical protector if not a glorious model for Bulgaria's future.

East European countries also differ significantly because of the individuals at the top of their respective regimes. Todor Zhivkov has been Bulgarian Party boss for an incredible 34 years; Nicolae Ceausescu has run Romania since 1965; Erich Honecker has headed the GDR regime since 1971, some 14 years before Gorbachev emerged at the top in Moscow. General Wojciech Jaruzelski has since 1981 been the only military officer to lead an East European regime. On the other hand, Milos Jakes came to power in Czechoslovakia in 1987—yet seems to resemble the cautious bureaucrat he replaced more than Jakes' innovative Soviet counterpart. Karoly Grosz succeeded Hungary's Janos Kadar in 1988 and seems, at least on the surface, much closer than Jakes to the Gorbachev mentality.

One senses a widespread feeling throughout the region, despite the many differences among its regimes and societies, that Gorbachev's determination to reform the Soviet economy carries with it a relatively high tolerance for diversity, democratization and pluralism in Eastern Europe as well as in the USSR.

One also senses a realization, particularly in the countries whose societies regard themselves as part of central Europe (Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary and Poland), that their future lies to the West, not to the East. A corollary to this view is that Gorbachev probably will fail in his attempt to modernize Russia and the rest of the Soviet Union in the foreseeable future, simply because Russia is too backward.

The net result is a potentially volatile mix of optimism and pessimism throughout the region. In varying degrees, East European societies welcome the opportunity for more national assertiveness, more individual and group freedoms. On the other hand, some senior regime officials—particularly in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and Romania—are leery of *perestroika, glasnost* and the accompanying notion that virtually everything in the Socialist world before 1985 was distorted or stagnant. Other regime officials, and many in society, recall the fate of such erstwhile reformers as Nikita Khrushchev, Imre Nagy and Aleksander Dubcek and wonder how long an opportunity for reform will endure, and what may replace it.

## Soviet Interests

Eastern Europe obviously is important to Moscow for security reasons, as the existence of the Warsaw Pact and the conduct of Warsaw Pact military exercises imply.[2] It is important to Moscow

[2]The Warsaw Pact, founded in 1955, consists of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the USSR.

economically, as indicated by the existence of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA)[3] and by the predominant role of Eastern Europe in Soviet foreign trade. Eastern Europe serves as a major market for Soviet raw materials and manufactured goods, as well as a supplier to the Soviet Union of food, manufactured goods and consumer goods. In light of Gorbachev's emphasis on restructuring the Soviet economy, Eastern Europe also serves as a source of economic innovation and reform.

Eastern Europe is also important to Moscow for ideological reasons. In the mid-1950's Nikita Khrushchev announced the emergence of the "world Socialist system," made up primarily of the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. Within this new international entity, political, economic and military cooperation supposedly would occur on a higher, more perfect level of cooperation and mutual understanding. According to Khrushchev and his colleagues, the emergence of the world Socialist system was no less than the most significant historical development since the "Great October Revolution" of 1917.

In effect, commencing with Khrushchev the Soviet leadership has characterized developments in Eastern Europe as a logical continuation of the Bolshevik Revolution. Viewed by Moscow as constituent parts of the world Socialist system, the "Socialist" regimes of Eastern Europe became central in demonstrating the Marxist-Leninist correctness of Soviet foreign policy. The "objective laws of history" were operating along the lines predicted by Lenin and Stalin. "Socialism in one country" had become socialism in one regional system.

In Khrushchev's grand vision of international affairs, the key relationship was between the Socialist and the capitalist world systems. Because the two systems represented opposing classes, this relationship was fundamentally antagonistic and at root represented a form of class struggle, even though it was termed "peaceful coexistence." Khrushchev's vision simultaneously emphasized the importance of the world Socialist system and peaceful coexistence between the Socialist and capitalist systems. In fact, Khrushchev argued that the strength of the world Socialist system made peaceful coexistence more viable. In his view, "Socialist international division of labor" and economic integration within the world Socialist system would change the international correlation of forces in socialism's favor and hence deter the warlike tendencies of capitalism.

The notion of a distinct, historically advanced world Socialist system would seem to run counter to Mikhail Gorbachev's "new political thinking" in foreign policy, which emphasizes common global interests as opposed to class interests. Khrushchev's concept nonetheless continues to enjoy a prominent place in current official Soviet pronouncements. For example, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, in his innovative July 1988 speech at the Foreign Ministry, called the world Socialist system and its political manifestation, the "Socialist commonwealth," "our enormous, priceless property and, as a factor of peace and progress, the property of all

[3]CMEA, founded in 1949, consists of the Warsaw Pact members plus Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam. Yugoslavia has observer status.

humanity." He added, "To augment it, to improve it, to develop further ties between its members of the system will make peace more reliable and secure."[4]

During his November 1988 visit to Hungary and Czechoslovakia, Soviet Politburo member and close Gorbachev adviser Aleksandr Yakovlev gave vague indications of how the world Socialist system should be improved. He noted that world socialism was at the beginning of "deep renewal" and was striving to overcome "the crisis phenomena." He spoke of reorganizing CMEA, of a new Socialist market featuring convertible currencies and direct contacts between production units based on financial interest," which would replace the current, "regressive" system of trade.[5] According to a WALL STREET JOURNAL report, sourced to Czechoslovak Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec, a CMEA summit to discuss creation of an integrated Socialist market is planned for March 1989 in Prague.[6]

At the same time, Gorbachev and his colleagues have proclaimed that a dictatorial Soviet approach to Eastern Europe is a thing of the past. As Soviet Politburo member Vadim Medvedev recently put it: there have been times when variety in Socialist development was viewed as a retreat from Marxism-Leninism and Socialist internationalism.

> 'These times are now past, never to return.'[7] Yakovlev similarly noted that 'the fraternal cooperation between our parties and countries is no longer characterized by transplanting methods used in one country into another, but by making sure that each country is working efficiently, independently, and responsibly, is aware of the others' experiences and, having carefully analyzed them, applies these experiences if rationality and necessity so require.'[8]

Moreover, high-ranking Soviet officials—although not Gorbachev himself—have said publicly that the "Brezhnev doctrine" justifying Soviet invasion of Eastern Europe has been discarded.[9] First Deputy Chief of the Central Committee International Department Georgiy Korniyenko, for example, stated in September 1988 (during a public debate in Italy) that "we've given up the Brezhnev principle of limited sovereignty . . . Every people has the right to choose its own development, and no state or party has the right to impose its own path of development, even if it is the best."[10]

Gorbachev's policy toward Eastern Europe would seem to be more tolerant of diversity, but his approach also assumes fundamental communality among the members of the Soviet-proclaimed world Socialist system. Hence East European regimes should remain "Socialist," as Moscow defines the term. They should be

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[4]Eduard Shevardnadze, quoted in VESTNIK MINISTERSTVA INOSTRANNYKH DEL SSSR (BULLETIN OF THE USSR FOREIGN MINISTRY), no. 15 (August 1988) p. 38.

[5]Aleksandr Yakovlev, quoted in Peter Vajda and Istvan Zalai, *Restructuring Is for People*, NEPSZABADSAG, November 12, 1988, p. 9, reprinted in FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE-SOVIET UNION *(hereinafter* FBIS-SOV)-88-231, p. 96.

[6]*Eastern Bloc Talks*, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, December 19, 1988.

[7]V. A. Medvedev, *The Contemporary Concept of Socialism*, PRAVDA, October 5, 1988, quoted in FBIS-SOV-88-194, p. 4.

[8]Aleksandr Yakovlev, quoted in Peter Vajda and Istvan Zalai, *Restructuring is for the People*, NEPSZABADSAG, November 12, 1988, reprinted in FBIS-SOV-88-231, p. 94.

[9]The "Brezhnev Doctrine," put forward in August 1968 as justification for the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia, argued that it was the Soviet Union's obligation to defend Socialist countries from outside threat.

[10]Georgiy Korniyenko, quoted by ANSA, September 16, 1988, reprinted in FBIS-SOV-88-181, p. 76.

worthy participants in the Warsaw Pact and CMEA, worthy trading partners with the Soviet Union, and active supporters of the USSR's general foreign policy goals. In short, while the latitude for independent action by East European countries appears to have broadened considerably under Gorbachev, it is not a latitude of infinite elasticity.

The exact boundaries of the permissible are unclear. And it remains to be seen how much pressure Gorbachev will exert on regimes whose leaders do not live up to Moscow's expectations. Moral pressure clearly is being applied, as when Aleksandr Yakovlev tells an East European interviewer that "we feel honored when fraternal parties and countries share our approach (to restructuring) and intend to implement this approach in their countries too," or when Vadim Medvedev tells a meeting of East European ideologies that socialism is "presented with a new historical challenge, demanding profound qualitative renewal."[11]

Meanwhile, Gorbachev has given strong public endorsement to the universality of national sovereignty, self-determination and non-interference in domestic affairs. His manifest concern to gain and maintain credibility, particularly in Western Europe, for his foreign policy may therefore constrain his use of coercion against East European countries.

## Expression of East European National Interests

The first 3½ years of Gorbachev's rule do not reveal fundamentally new patterns of foreign policy behavior by East European countries. But each of the six countries has distinctive national interests. And if Gorbachev endures, along with his current policies of *perestroika* and new political thinking, East European regimes as well as East European societies are likely to feel increasingly safe in asserting these interests more forcefully. As Czechoslovak human rights activist Jaroslav Sabata recently put it, "Gorbachev has opened up a new climate here; he is destroying the old atmosphere of fear."[12]

Some recent differences in foreign policy behavior suggest possible lines of future divergencies. Given area-wide economic problems, it is instructive to look at the general foreign trade pattern for each East European country (as of 1985). One finds considerable differences in the geographical distribution of foreign trade, as the following table indicates:

| Percent of trade with | CMEA | West | 3rd world |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bulgaria | 75.6 | 11.9 | 11.1 |
| Czechoslovakia | 74.1 | 15.5 | 5.7 |
| GDR | 63.6 | 29.3 | 5.2 |

[11] Aleksandr Yakovlev, quoted in Peter Vajda and Istvan Zalai, *Restructuring is for the People*, NEPSZABADSAG, November 12, 1988, reprinted in FBIS-SOV-88-23, p. 94; Vadim Medvedev, *The Contemporary Concept of Socialism. International Scientific Conference*, PRAVDA, October 5, 1988, p. 4, reprinted in FBIS-SOV-88-194, p. 4.

[12] William Echikson, *Czech Leaders Dig into Block Soviet-style Reform*, THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, August 17, 1988.

—Continued

| Percent of trade with | CMEA | West | 3rd world |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hungary | 52.1 | 34.0 | 9.2 |
| Poland | 69.3 | 21.1 | 5.6 |
| Romania | 51.0 | 32.0 | [18]20.0 |

[18]Statisticheskiy Yezhegodnik Stran-chlenov Soveta Ekonomicheskoi Vzaimopomoshchi, Sekretariat SEV, "Finansy i Statistika," (Statistical Yearbook of CEMA Member Countries, Finance and Statistics Branch of the CEMA Secretariat), (Moscow, 1986), p. 303 and Bartlomeij Kaminski and Robert W. James, *Economic Rationale for Eastern Europe's Third World Policy*, Problems of Communism, (March-April 1988).

Particularly striking are differences in hard currency indebtedness, in turn reflecting different views of participation in world capital markets, of, in other words, dealing with the "world capitalist system" as well as the world Socialist system. Hard currency indebtedness also has an impact upon domestic policy, requiring austerity in domestic economic programs that adds to internal stress.

According to the Wharton Econometric Forecasting Associates, rounded numbers showing each country's hard currency indebtedness (in billions of dollars) are as follows:

| | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Poland | 25.3 | 33.0 | 37.6 |
| Hungary | 11.8 | 15.2 | 17.3 |
| GDR | 13.5 | 16.4 | 16.6 |
| Bulgaria | 3.6 | 5.5 | 5.6 |
| Czechoslovakia | 3.4 | 4.1 | 4.9 |
| Romania | 6.6 | 6.0 | 4.7 |

Romania is unique for the draconian austerity measures it adopted to reduce its foreign debt. Romania also stands out for its relative independence from Soviet foreign policy. It was the only country of the six not to break diplomatic relations with Israel in 1967, not to participate in the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 or join the Soviet boycott of the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, and the only Warsaw Pact country that has refused to allow Pact maneuvers on its territory.

Many other foreign policy differences, among the six and between some of them and the USSR, have emerged in recent years. In the national security field, for example, Soviet deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic stimulated peace movements in both countries. Soviet pressure for increased defense spending in Eastern Europe produced grumbling in Hungary and Poland about the negative impact on the nondefense sectors of their respective economies. Yet, as contrasted to the Soviet Union's allotment of some 15-20 percent of GNP to defense, in 1984 Eastern Europe allocated only about 3 to 6 percent, with Romania spending less than 2 percent of GNP for defense.[14]

[14]*Comecon Defense Costs Nettle East Europe*, The Wall Street Journal, June 13, 1984.

When one defines national interests as including concern over national identity at home and abroad, one captures another range of differences between and among East European countries.

For example:

- Romania's harsh treatment of ethnic Hungarians in Romania, and Hungary's angry reaction to it;
- Bulgaria's suppression of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria, and its aspirations regarding what is now the territory of Yugoslavia and Greece;
- the phenomenon of German national consciousness in the German Democratic Republic, taken together with the flourishing of inner-German relations and the cultural impact of the Federal Republic of Germany in the German Democratic Republic;
- enmity between Poles and Germans, a remnant of both World War II and pre-World War I partitions, but exacerbated by more current events such as the German Democratic Republic's partially closing its border with Poland to keep out "contagion" from Solidarity;
- pollution from Romanian plants that has affected neighboring Hungary and Yugoslavia, with up to 10,000 people demonstrating in the Bulgarian border town of Ruse against chlorine gas pollution from Romania.

Differences such as these among the East European countries have manifested themselves at the Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. In this review meeting, some limited but significant differences emerged in the negotiating positions of the seven Warsaw Pact countries. As the meeting moved toward conclusion, Poland and Hungary seemed prepared to agree to Western positions on human rights and other matters and go home, while the German Democratic Republic strongly resisted a Western proposal that it give up compulsory currency exchange for all westerners crossing its border.

Bulgaria was stubborn on the issue of minority rights, evidently having in mind its Turkish population, while on the same issue Hungary distanced itself from its Warsaw Pact allies by co-sponsoring a Western proposal and agreeing to language proposed by the neutral and non-aligned group. The Czechoslovaks opposed allowing greater religious freedom, and the Romanians preferred to avoid human rights issues altogether.[15]

## The Balance Sheet

Assuming that Gorbachev continues to serve as General Secretary, and that his domestic and foreign policies progress along present lines, the overlay of Soviet influence and interests should lighten, allowing more natural expression of East European national interests. Gorbachev and his associates probably will treat East European countries less as components of the world Socialist system and more as sovereign states. Their latitude for independent action should therefore increase.

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[15] *More Security, Less Cooperation*, THE ECONOMIST, October 29, 1988, p. 50.

One result could be, as some in Western Europe have predicted, an "Africanization" of Eastern Europe, in which latent chaos produces military coups, and economic and political systems exist primarily to guard the privileges of those in power.[16] Another result could be the gradual "Finlandization" of the region, with each country largely free to shape its own domestic order so long as its internal politics are not hostile to the USSR and its foreign policy does not threaten Soviet interests.

As noted, Gorbachev's vision of the international arena evidently still includes the ideological notion of "the world Socialist system." At this writing, it is unclear how Gorbachev and his supporters see the interaction between global and class interests in this arena. Uncertainty on this score was expressed recently by Vadim Medvedev, who stated that "the realities of the contemporary epoch demand a more accurate explanation of the correlation between universal and class priorities in mutual relations between the two systems."[17]

What is certain at this juncture is the understandable preoccupation of Gorbachev and his Soviet colleagues with the USSR's domestic situation. By their own admission, the status of economic reform will remain critical for at least the next 2 to 5 years. Meanwhile, national unrest in the Baltic States and the Caucasus demands attention, as does the less dramatic but nonetheless vital issue of convincing a skeptical Soviet populace to support a reform program that seems incapable of producing tangible improvements in its daily life.

As with the first 4 years of Gorbachev's tenure as Party General Secretary, the next 4 years should be a time of flux in Eastern Europe. The region's respective regimes, as well as its peoples, will keep a close watch on developments in the USSR. To the extent that Gorbachev succeeds in restructuring the Soviet system, pressure will mount on unrestructured regimes to follow suit. To the extent that Gorbachev shifts Soviet foreign policy away from its traditional emphasis on class differences, toward common global interests, East European Governments should have more leeway to advance their own national interests as opposed to Moscow's international agenda.

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[16] Jim Hoagland, *Communist Crackup*, THE WASHINGTON POST, October 20, 1988.

[17] Vadim Medvedev, *The Contemporary Concept of Socialism. International Scientific Conference*, PRAVDA, October 5, 1988, reprinted in FBIS-SOV-88-194.

## ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REFORM

Several factors have combined to make the period since March 1985 a time of reform in Eastern Europe. Like the reforms themselves, these factors have varying impacts on each of the countries and can complement as well as contradict each other. Among the most important are:

1. *Developments in Soviet-East European Relations.* As noted in the preceding section, Gorbachev's policy toward Eastern Europe still has a significant ideological component, and it remains ill-defined at the margins. Still, his approach has been relatively pragmatic and has given the region's countries increased leeway to reform their respective economic and political systems. One result, as Timothy Garton Ash has noted, is that "for the first time in decades the primary limits to political change in Eastern Europe are not external but internal."[1]

2. *Developments in the Soviet Union.* Gorbachev's own reform effort, in both the economic and the political sphere, has acted as a catalyst and in some cases as a guide to reform in Eastern Europe. This is evident in the way Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia have at least nominally imitated specific Soviet reform programs. Hungary and Poland have not followed the Soviet model as closely—perhaps because they feel Moscow is now imitating them. Still, Hungary and Poland would doubtless be more hesitant about the reforms they are undertaking if the Soviet Union were moving in the opposite direction. The German Democratic Republic and Romania claim Gorbachev's reforms are not relevant to their respective situations, but these regimes must be keenly aware that they are deviating from the current Soviet norm.

It should be noted in this regard that the general logic of Gorbachev's restructuring applies to all East European regimes. Despite the many differences among them, each of these regimes originally was put in place by Stalin and was patterned after the economic and political institutions Stalin had established in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev is now saying that the Stalinist approach seriously deformed socialism in the USSR in the prewar as well as postwar periods, was largely unchanged during Brezhnev's rule (except for the introduction of widespread corruption), has led the Soviet economy to a "pre-crisis" situation, and therefore must be restructured on a priority basis. The implication for East European regimes is clear, particularly for those regimes whose current party chiefs (Bulgaria's Zhivkov, the German Democratic Republic's Honecker, Romania's Ceausescu) were colleagues of Brezhnev and thus

[1]Timothy Garton Ash, *The Empire in Decay,* THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS, September 29, 1988.



93-576 - 89 - 2

identified with "the period of stagnation," as Soviet media now characterize the Brezhnev years.

3. *Leadership Change in Eastern Europe.* Leadership changes do not translate directly into reform but, given the pressure of the Soviet example and the generational differences between Gorbachev and most of his East European counterparts, can represent the removal of a powerful impediment to reform. For example, it has been argued that "Honecker is personally identified with the policy of heavy state subsidies to ensure that rent, food and transport stay cheap."[2] To the extent that this is true, it will be difficult to criticize these policies as long as Honecker is in power. The importance of leadership change is seen in Hungary, where Karoly Grosz, Miklos Nemeth, and a younger, more reform-minded generation have replaced the aging Janos Kadar and his old guard. Similar changes may come in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, and possibly Romania in the not too distant future. Perhaps significant in this regard are recent decisions by the Czechoslovak and GDR regimes to move up their party congresses from 1991 to 1990.[3]

4. *The Economic Crisis in the Region.* Economic difficulties have stimulated reform in East European countries in the past. But the economic problems of the mid-1980's are region-wide and in cumulative effect are particularly acute. They include slow or non-existent economic growth (in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, GNP actually declined), a heavy foreign debt burden, product shortages and, in some cases, rationing of consumer goods. Even if these economic problems were to abate, pressure for reform would be generated by the widening economic gap between East and West.

5. *General Improvement in East-West Relations.* Lowered East-West tensions make it difficult to argue for postponing domestic reform because of foreign threat. While couched in ideological rather than military terms, one GDR official's comment that they "must tread more carefully" than Moscow, "since 'the class enemy stands directly in front of the door' " suggests the use of a perceived Western threat as an argument for maintaining the status quo. When tensions ease, such arguments become less convincing.[4]

6. *The Waning of Ideology.* The societies and regimes of Eastern Europe are generally becoming less ideological and more pragmatic. After 40 years of Communist rule, Marxist-Leninist doctrine has become less pivotal both in determining and justifying official policies. As Ash has noted, "Threadbare as the ideological legitimization had already become, its nearly total abandonment in favor of arguments of raison d'etat, expediency, or efficiency is a significant development."[5]

7. *The Broadening of Dissent.* Ideology has also become less of basis for internal opposition to East European regimes. Movements sur-

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[2] *East Germany's Sad Miracle,* THE ECONOMIST, July 30, 1988.

[3] Jackson Diehl, *In Spite of Itself, Czechoslovakia Accepts Changes,* THE WASHINGTON POST, December 12, 1988.

[4] Elizabeth Pond, *The Irony of East Germany's Relative Economic Prosperity,* THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, January 2, 1987.

[5] Timothy Garton Ash, *The Empire in Decay,* THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS, September 29, 1988.

rounding non-ideological issues (such as growing concern over environmental problems), increasing numbers of strikes and a resurgence of populist sentiment have recently led to a broadening of dissent in Eastern Europe beyond what the regimes are able to control, short of reinstituting Stalinist totalitarianism. This, in turn, may make the general population less fearful of expressing independent views and may pressure the regimes, whether they like it or not, to adapt to current realities.

8. *The Influence of the West.* Given the increasingly visible technological and economic gap between East and West, East European regimes may feel that reform is a precondition to creating and maintaining needed ties with the West. The experience of the 1970's, when economic relations (i.e., increased imports, financed by substantial borrowing) were viewed mistakenly as a substitute for reform, indicated a need to make the Eastern economies more adaptable to Western technology and know-how. Political experience (e.g., the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, economic sanctions against Poland) indicated that a failure to liberalize would make Western Governments less willing to assist.

In this sense, Western public diplomacy in the 1980's—including the increased use of radio broadcasting, a series of CSCE meetings on human rights and humanitarian issues (Madrid, Ottawa, Budapest, Bern and Vienna), less lenient terms for the conduct of trade, and even economic sanctions, may have produced little in direct and obvious results but nevertheless had a longer-term effect that is now becoming evident. In addition, the need for International Monetary Fund and World Bank resources has been an added incentive for undertaking reform in Hungary and Poland, as possible future entry into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) may become for non-participants such as Bulgaria.

## The Economic Environment

The interplay of these factors is complex: their existence or absence in a given country can have powerful effects, both positive and negative, on the environment for economic reform. But their net influence is to stimulate reform. Above all, existing economic conditions may leave little choice. As one Western analyst has written, "Each East European State ultimately faces a choice between retrenchment and reform. Having reached their own Rubicon, the crossing could prove perilous, but a retreat would almost certainly prove fatal."[6]

Efforts of the 1970's to improve economic performance by importing from the West were having just the opposite effect in the 1980's. Increased imports had to be financed by substantial borrowing from Western commercial banks, often with official backing from Western Governments. When these banks stopped further credit inflows around 1980, it became increasingly difficult for East European countries to repay their maturing debt without access to new credits. Unlike the Soviet Union, the countries of Eastern

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[6] Janusz Bugajski, *The Bird in Moscow's Cage: Eastern Europe and Perestroika*, THE NATIONAL INTEREST (Summer 1988), p. 68.

Europe had limited foreign exchange reserves and a limited natural resource base for export, forcing them to generate hard-currency trade surpluses through a combination of increasing exports and decreasing imports.

The world recession that paralleled this debt crisis made exporting all the more difficult and placed the primary burden on cutting imports. Only the German Democratic Republic, having higher quality goods and special access to the FRG market, was able to increase hard-currency export levels in the early 1980's. For the others, a dramatic cut in imports was the only viable short-term solution, despite obvious negative effects on the domestic economies.

As a whole, according to a U.S. Department of Commerce report, East European countries cut imports by about 28 percent from 1980 to 1984 and introduced severe austerity measures.[7] Only Bulgaria, which acted to correct its hard-currency deficits much earlier, increased imports during this period. The overall decrease in import activity, together with recovering Western markets, helped turn a hard-currency deficit into a surplus for the region. But it had a negative impact on the quality of life in Eastern Europe, in particular by reducing the amount of goods available for public consumption and disrupting import-dependent industries.

Faced with a dramatically worsened economic situation and the exclusion of major increases in the importation of Western machinery and technology as a potential short-term solution, policy makers in Eastern Europe were confronted with a need to engage in at least some reform efforts to revitalize their economies. The most far-reaching changes were in Hungary and Poland. Several developments took place in Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia as well, although the reforms proposed were not as advanced as those in Hungary or Poland. In the German Democratic Republic and Romania, where, ironically, the economic situation is respectively the best and the worst in Eastern Europe, there have been few, if any, reform developments in recent years.

The essence of economic reform has been to reduce the dependency of production units on central planning and the dictates of powerful industrial ministries. Normally, the reform process begins with a change in the role of the central plan; it becomes less a specific blueprint and more a general long-term guide for economic activity. In the place of specific planning indicators, "profitability" (within the confines of general planning indicators and other central controls) governs enterprise activity. To be effective, this change requires breaking the power of the industrial ministries that supervise the various enterprises, modifying prices to reflect scarcity and eliminate state subsidies, and activating financial institutions and tax systems. It also means, in the broader picture, granting foreign trade rights to enterprises, thereby eliminating the monopoly of foreign trade that separates domestic and foreign economic activities.

As a general rule, however, the reforms have caused considerable short-term disruption which, in turn, either leads to resistance to

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[7] U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, *Statistical Abstract of East-West Trade and Finance* (Project DIE-47-86, March 1986).

further reforms or even to measures which undermine the reforms just taken. As one recent study by the Economic Commission for Europe concluded:

> . . . irrespective of the differences between the individual reforming or reform-oriented countries, several major problems can already be discerned. First of all, in most countries even initial attempts to curtail or relax certain mechanisms of traditional planning—such as mandatory planning indicators, the state procurement, fixed prices for major food items including large subsidies, dependence of wages on the central wage fund rather than on the output of the enterprise and its sales, etc.—very soon reveal considerable imbalances in national economies which either compromise output growth or give rise to inflationary pressures. These usually call for a prolongation of transitional mechanisms such as state orders or government contracts in the branches involved and/or an extension of the time horizon of their application. This in itself impedes the economic reforms or even pulls the economic process back towards traditional arrangements.[8]

## Country-by-Country Economic Reform Efforts

*BULGARIA.* Bulgaria has experienced no major economic upheavals in recent years, but neither does it have a notable history of successful economic reform. Beginning in early 1986, however, a campaign of restructuring was launched that was intended to make the economy more efficient and to encourage initiative at lower levels. At a July 1987 Plenum of the Bulgarian Communist Party, moves to establish greater "self-management" in Bulgaria's economic system were announced that would leave basic decision-making to enterprises. In theory, self-managing enterprises would be free to determine what to produce and how to produce it, set wages, seek bank financing and dispose of profits as they saw fit. Net profit would determine their economic viability. Eight commercial banks, controlled by the National Bank, were founded to act as financial regulators of enterprise performance.

In an attempt to eliminate the powers of middle-ranking bureaucrats, on August 18, 1987, the Bulgarian National Assembly session scrapped several ministries, including four "super-ministries" that had been established in 1986 following the abolition of branch ministries. These were merged into new bodies, including a Ministry of Economy and Planning and a Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations. The 27 counties, into which the country had been divided geographically, were transformed into 9 larger regions to facilitate territorial coordination.[9]

As described by Minister of Foreign Economic Relations Andrei Lukanov in April 1988, planning is now "strategic;" it aims at

> coordinating the national effort to achieve certain policy objectives in the longrun, leaving the operational responsibilities, the decision-making in day-to-day economic life to enterprises, to economic units and to people who work in them and relying mainly on economic interests—the interests of individuals, the interests of collectives—as the major guiding principle of economic decision-making.[10]

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[8]United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe, ECONOMIC SURVEY OF EUROPE in 1987-88, (1988), p. 276.

[9]*Ibid.*, p. 277.

[10]Andrei Lukanov, Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, Speech before the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., April 25, 1988.

The state plan will no longer have mandatory planning indicators; only "state orders" in the plan, dealing with Bulgaria's foreign transactions and large, nation-wide projects, must be fulfilled. Otherwise, the activities of a particular enterprise are regulated by the *Set of Rules on Economic Activity* which was issued in December 1987.

One Western reporter noted that these moves "suggested that Bulgaria might become the most thoroughly transformed country in the Soviet camp."[11] This, however, has turned out not to be the case. First, because of the ambiguities in the documents elaborating the self-management system, and the lack of guidance about future pricing and taxation policies, the authorities have had little success in persuading enterprises to implement changes. Indeed, some factories closed "after managers panicked when called on to make decisions and failed to issue essential orders."[12] There was also significant resistance from displaced provincial bureaucrats. In short, the reforms did more to create chaos than to increase productivity, as reflected by persistent reports of breakdowns and general confusion in the economy.

Second, in October 1987, the Soviet Union reportedly cautioned its closest ally to limit the scope of the reforms and to slow their pace, the apparent result of concern that the reforms were too far reaching. In any event, the Bulgarian leadership therefore trimmed the scale and slowed the pace of reform in the fall of 1987. A special Party conference in January 1988, originally intended to establish new principles under which Bulgaria's economy and society would be run, instead gave only general endorsement to restructuring efforts. The scope of self-management was left vague. Crucial moves, such as reform of the pricing system, were postponed.

*CZECHOSLOVAKIA.* Although it has undertaken limited reform in the past, including a set of measures in 1980 that never had much impact, for the most part the Czechoslovak economy has operated fairly well relative to the other economies of Eastern Europe. Czechoslovakia at first appeared skeptical about the need for further economic reform as the mid-1980's approached. For example, at a Central Committee plenum of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in June 1985, General Secretary Gustav Husak stated that no market-oriented concepts should be expected. Another Czechoslovak official, S. Potac, was blunter, "Czechoslovakia will take no risks . . . Some people might call this conservative, but we call it stable, dynamic development."[13]

This view was reflected in the Czechoslovak attitude toward the debt crisis that Eastern Europe faced in the earlier part of the decade. Although Czechoslovakia's debt level was relatively small, it slashed imports by 25 percent from 1980 to 1985 to avoid economic difficulties which would have strengthened calls for reform.[14]

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[11] Henry Kamm, *Bulgaria Reins In Its Enthusiasm for Change,* THE NEW YORK TIMES, February 3, 1988.

[12] *Too Much, Too Soon,* TIME, February 6, 1988.

[13] S. Potac, quoted in Franz-Lothar Altman, *Czechoslovakia: Internal Economic Development and Foreign Economic Relations in the 1980's,* in NATO Economics Directorate, THE ECONOMIES OF EASTERN EUROPE AND THEIR FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS (Brussels 1986), p. 122.

[14] U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, *Statistical Abstract of East-West Trade and Finance* (Project DIE-47-86, March 1986).

Nevertheless, Czechoslovakia, like Bulgaria, has declared a policy of Gorbachev-style restructuring. The plan was revealed only toward the end of 1987 and has yet to be spelled out in detail. Enterprises are to gain a significant degree of independence, and mandatory planning indicators will be eliminated, although the planning authorities will still dominate the general direction of economic activity. As in Bulgaria, state orders in the plan will still direct priority projects. Along with increased independence, cost accounting will be applied more strictly, and enterprises will be held increasingly responsible for their own viability.

At about the same time (in 1986) that the Soviet Union announced its intention to permit joint ventures with foreign firms on its territory, Prague announced a new policy that would allow such ventures in Czechoslovakia.

Beginning in 1989, a comprehensive reform of wholesale prices is to take place, the State Bank will be broken into several autonomous commercial banks, and the new economic mechanism just described will be introduced into certain economic sectors. New regulations regarding foreign economic ties will also be introduced, as the Czechoslovaks seek eventually to make the *koruna* (crown) convertible. In 1990, tax reform and further organizational measures are to finalize the restructuring process. What these specific measures will look like in practice is not clear and may in large part, depend on in-fighting between the reform-minded and the conservative factions in the Czechoslovak leadership.

Regime economists themselves have shown caution in assessing the prospects for economic reform. According to Vratislav Izak of the Institute of Economy,"In the future we will inevitably go in one of two directions: either back to the administrative system, or toward a marketplace economy as in Hungary or Poland. This is an open question, and above all a political question."[15]

*GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.* The German Democratic Republic is the one country in Eastern Europe that probably will not be forced into reform by impending economic problems. It has developed the most successful economy in Eastern Europe and apparently sees little reason to tinker with it. In terms of *per capita* income it leads the other East European states and the Soviet Union; the German Democratic Republic surpasses them in terms of labor productivity and living standards by up to 50 percent.[16]

The current GDR goal seems to be to preserve what it has already achieved and to continue to build on its economic achievements. This position was summed up by Erich Honecker as early as 1985 when, commenting on some of Gorbachev's reform plans, he stated, "Our economy is not a field for experiments."[17] Instead, the GDR leadership speaks of the need to continue "perfecting" the economic system, referring to the economic changes that have already been implemented in the 1960's and 1970's. GDR officials cite these changes when claiming that the German Democratic Repub-

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[15]Quoted in Jackson Diehl, *In Spite of Itself, Czechoslovakia Accepts Changes,* THE WASHINGTON POST, December 19, 1988.

[16]Dirk W.W. Rumberg, *Glasnost in the GDR? The Impact of Gorbachev's Reform Policy on the German Democratic Republic,* INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, Vol. 9 (May 1988), p. 205.

[17]*Ibid,* pp. 206-7.

lic has already responded to the type of economic challenges facing the Soviet Union.[18]

The GDR economy is not without its problems. Despite significant assistance from the Federal Republic of Germany, it has slipped from its longstanding ranking as the world's 10th-leading industrial power to 26th, and its new technology is falling behind that of the West.[19] Many of the goods that the German Democratic Republic does sell to Western countries can also be supplied increasingly and often more cheaply by newly industrialized countries.[20] Moreover, the German Democratic Republic faces increased demands in trade and technological cooperation with the Soviet Union, which means the export to the USSR of many industrial goods that might otherwise be marketable in the West or used to modernize the GDR's own industries. Thus, while the German Democratic Republic maintains a comfortable position economically relative to its allies, its future position is far from secure.

In the face of an uncertain economic future, the GDR leadership recently appears to have undertaken a somewhat more flexible attitude toward improving the country's economic performance, but the keynote is still "more of the same," as opposed to significant restructuring. For example, on February 12, 1988, in his annual speech to the first secretaries of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) district organizations, Honecker criticized recent economic performance. He suggested tighter labor discipline, a more careful selection of cadres to run enterprises, and better coordination between the State Planning Commission and the directors of the combines created during past reforms to execute the central plan and coordinate the activity of smaller enterprises under their supervision. In January 1988, regulations went into effect to allow economic combines greater responsibility in allocating investment funds. While a major price reform is not expected, the German Democratic Republic has recently begun experimenting with changes in the price system in industry and the construction sector as well as with curbing subsidies in agriculture.[21]

*HUNGARY.* Hungary has a long history of economic reform. In 1968, the regime lifted mandatory planning indicators and broadly decentralized the economic system. Relative to other East European states, living standards rose markedly. Further reform efforts stalled in the early 1970's, but as the situation grew increasingly dim in the later part of the decade, the Hungarians responded with a series of additional and far-reaching reforms which made the Hungarian economy the most differentiated and decentralized of all the economies of Eastern Europe.

Among the measures taken in the late 1970's and early 1980's were: 1) The introduction of "competitive" pricing, including several price increases similar to but not as dramatic as those in Poland;

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[18]Barbara Donovan, *Is the East German Economy Running into Trouble?,* BACKGROUND REPORT/64 (GDR) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, April 14, 1988).

[19]Victoria Pope, *Bonn Policy Makers Caught Off Guard by East German Crackdown on Dissent,* THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, January 29, 1988.

[20]Dirk W.W. Rumberg, *Glasnost in the GDR? The Impact of Gorbachev's Reform Policy on the German Democratic Republic,* INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, Vol. 9 (May 1988), p. 207.

[21]Barbara Donovan, *Is the East German Economy Running into Trouble?,* BACKGROUND REPORT/64 (GDR), (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, April 14, 1988).

2) the merger of three branch ministries into one Ministry of Industry; 3) the gradual dismantling of large enterprises and trusts, as well as support for a diverse range of new economic units, such as small enterprises, economic working groups and cooperatives; 4) banking reforms, particularly since 1984, such as the separation of Hungarian National Bank from smaller commercial banks, and the introduction of foreign banks (as a result, the financial sector in Hungary no longer plays the passive role traditional to the centrally planned economies); and 5) the 1984 introduction of a bond market, which has since expanded. Securities are now issued by the Hungarian National Bank, the commercial banks, and several major enterprises.[22]

Despite these reforms, many of which are unprecedented in Eastern Europe and challenge traditional tenets of Marxist-Leninist economic doctrine, Hungary has continued to experience considerable economic difficulties. As Charles Gati pointed out in testimony to the Commission in March 1988,

> With the economy both centrally planned and subject to market forces too, Hungary has ended up with the worst of both worlds: [1] Freeing the price of agricultural goods has brought plenty of food to the cities—but now there is considerable inflation. [2] Allowing the private sector to function has improved the supply of goods and services—but high taxes on entrepreneurs' incomes have come to curtail their ambitions and activities. [3] Borrowing from the West has improved living standards—but having borrowed excessively has now prompted the introduction of strict austerity measures.[23]

One of the most important reforms was the new law on bankruptcy, which went into effect in September 1986. This law, the first of its kind in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union, allows for the liquidation of enterprises operating at a loss and includes provisions for relocating workers. As a result, it is estimated that between 100,000 and 200,000 Hungarians could be laid off, breaking the Communist tradition of maintaining at least theoretical full employment. In November 1988, the State Wage and Labor Office put forward a comprehensive unemployment compensation program.[24]

The nature of enterprise management has also been changed. Beginning in 1985, enterprise managers were given greater independence and at the same time made more accountable to the work force they supervise. Enterprises serving a public utility function remained under state management, but the majority came under the supervision of elected enterprise councils or workers' assemblies. Those with enterprise councils still have ministry-appointed managers, but the council has veto power over managerial decisions. Those with workers's assemblies can select their own managers, making the position more competitive and thereby stimulating managerial initiative. As one result, management turnover has been considerable since 1985.

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[22]Paul Gregory Hare, *Hungary: Internal Economic Developments*, in NATO Economics Directorate, THE ECONOMIES OF EASTERN EUROPE AND THEIR FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS, (Brussels, 1986), p. 217.

[23]Charles Gati, Testimony Before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, March 15, 1988, pp. 2-3.

[24]SITUATION REPORT/19 (HUNGARY) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, December 5, 1988).

Other recent reforms have centered around the tax system. Beginning on January 1, 1988, a value-added tax (VAT) and a progressive personal income tax were introduced. The VAT tax was intended to lift some of the existing burden on enterprises that were losing as much as 90 percent of their profits to taxes that in turn subsidized inefficient enterprises elsewhere in the economy. It was also expected to encourage greater efficiency in the use of existing capital and lead to greater financial transparency. The progressive income tax was intended to compensate individuals for the loss of revenue resulting from the VAT tax, provide more reliable revenues for the state budget and slow the growing differentiation in incomes in Hungary. Its impact will be felt least on wage-income, most on income from secondary employment, entrepreneurial profits and property income.[25]

The Hungarians have reformed the foreign trade sector as well. Measures in the early 1980's allowed the number of enterprises with foreign trade rights to grow to over 300, and, as of January 1, 1988, any Hungarian enterprise could register to engage in foreign trade transactions. In addition, an amended joint venture law enacted in January 1986 provided foreign partners greater tax incentives and more flexible operating rules. It also codified the prior practice of providing tax holidays for new joint companies.

*POLAND.* The Polish regime has undertaken economic reform on several occasions, commencing with efforts to overcome workers' riots in October 1956, but until recently it had stopped short of sorely-needed structural reform. An economic strategy of improving performance through imports from the West resulted in a staggering degree of economic decline in the late 1970's and early 1980's, featuring a sharp drop in produced national income, deep cuts in imports, and high inflation rates. By the mid-1980's, the regime was constrained by workers' strikes and other social disturbances, as well as by massive foreign debt. Yet the need for more radical reform was inescapable.

Some reforms were implemented in the midst of the economic crisis in the early 1980's, such as removing planning indicators in 1982, reducing controls on investment in 1983, and expanding foreign trade rights for Polish firms in 1984. It was in 1986, however, that a new, "second stage" of economic reform was designed to move beyond immediate stabilization needs to a larger, long-term expansion of economic activity.

Parts of this "second stage" were implemented in October 1987. For example, a reorganization of the central government included elimination of all industrial branch industries and creation of a single Ministry of Industry, resulting in a reduction of 2,500 to 2,800 out of 12,000 posts in the central apparatus. Enterprises were given increased autonomy from supervising institutions, including additional ability to engage in foreign trade directly, and new financial institutions were created to facilitate economic recovery.

Polish authorities recognized that further price increases, as well as relative changes in prices, were needed to remove imbalances in

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[25]United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe, ECONOMIC SURVEY OF EUROPE IN 1987-1988 (1988), p. 277.

domestic markets. Given regime concern over public reaction to additional hikes in retail prices, the Polish parliament voted to allow the population to decide by referendum whether it was willing to see an additional fall in its standard of living in the short term which would result from an acceleration in economic reform. Solidarity called for a boycott of the referendum, and the regime-controlled National Trade Union Alliance (OPZZ) expressed serious reservations about the proposed reforms. A majority of those voting favored the price increase/reform package, but the referendum did not pass because the pro-reform vote was less than half the total number of eligible voters. The regime nevertheless interpreted the results as a mandate for additional price increases and reform, though at a slowed pace that would not jeopardize further the already lowered living standards.

In early 1988, the parliament approved a modified "second stage" reform program. Soon thereafter, the prices of many goods were raised sharply (e.g., a 27 percent increase in the price of foodstuffs, and an average 40 percent rise in other prices). Fuel and energy prices rose by as much as 100 percent. As a result, inflation in Poland in 1988 may be as high as 70 percent.[26] Although the price increases were somewhat counterbalanced by additional wage increases and the end of rationing, the move evoked a widespread, negative popular reaction and workers' strikes in April and May of 1988. After a second wave of nationwide strikes in August, the Polish regime in the fall of 1988 agreed to engage in talks that would include discussion of future economic measures. At the same time, the regime continued to make economic adjustments, despite their unpopularity—including a plan to close the same Lenin shipyard in Gdansk where Solidarity was founded, on grounds that the shipyard was not a productive enterprise.

In December 1988, the "second stage" was further implemented by passage of two laws removing controls on privately-owned businesses and encouraging private investment. The first law in theory allows private entrepreneurs to establish businesses without prior official permission, guarantees them equal access to bank credits and raw materials, and removes all limits on the size of a private business. The second law allows foreign investors to hold up to 100 percent of a firm in Poland, but the law's tax provisions compare unfavorably to those available for joint ventures in China, Hungary and the Soviet Union.[27]

The liberalizing effect of these laws reportedly was strengthened shortly after the October 1988 appointment of a new government under Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowski. The new legislation is said to be part of a package of several dozen laws that will basically restructure the economy over the next several years. According to government spokesperson Urban, "We are no longer afraid of radical reforms; the Poland you see several years from now will have a different economy than it has had until now."[28]

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[26]United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe, ECONOMIC SURVEY OF EUROPE IN 1987-1988 (1988), p. 276.

[27]Jackson Diehl, *Poland Eases Curbs on Private Sector,* THE WASHINGTON POST, December 24, 1988.

[28]*Ibid.*

Perhaps the Rakowski government will make a lasting contribution to Polish economic reform. Much will depend upon further implementation of the "second stage" package. Poland appears to have a greater latitude for implementing genuine economic changes than was the case during the previous reform periods. More importantly, failure to produce real economic improvements now will likely fuel the spiraling cycles of social unrest for which Poland is famous.

*ROMANIA.* President Nicolae Ceaucescu has rejected economic restructuring, arguing that Bucharest embarked long ago on a program of modernization and structural reorganization. In Ceausescu's words, "No one can conceive of a revolutionary party saying that it will let enterprises or economic sectors manage themselves and no longer interfere in the management of the enterprise or of scientific, cultural, or other activities."[29]

At a Central Committee plenum of the Romanian Communist Party in November 1985, Ceausescu stated that,

> The party must reject with all our determination some theses enunciated here and there . . . concerning a certain diminishment of the role or importance of the common property of the working people and the encouragement, in one form or another, of some forms of private property. Such attitudes...totally contradict Socialist principles and the fact that our people have abolished capitalist ownership of the means of production and distribution once and for all—and will never again admit manifestations of it in Romania.[30]

He has also criticized reforms in the Soviet Union which would make the banking sector a more active participant in economic affairs as a threat to centralized planning. Throughout the past several years, and most recently at a November 1988 Central Committee Plenum, Ceausescu has stuck to this line, to use one of his favorite adverbs, unflinchingly.

At first glance, Romania's austerity program seems to set the stage for reform, but the remarkable severity of the program precludes it from strengthening the Romanian economy. Virtually all production is feeding repayment of Romania's foreign debt—which has allowed Ceausescu to halve that debt in a 5-year period. In the meantime, Romania has preserved all of the essential features of the traditional Soviet economic model: highly centralized plans, a proliferation of industrial ministries, and an absence of prices which reflect the forces of supply and demand. The resulting imbalances and their effects— food and fuel rationing, shortages of basic goods, etc.—obviously have not been perceived by Ceausescu as sufficient grounds for reform.

The closest thing to a "reform program" in Romania is the *sistematizare* program of urban and rural restructuring. "By the year 2000," a regime statement claims, Romania expects "to eradicate basic differences between villages and cities and to ensure the harmonious development of all sections of the country."[31] Unlike the

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[29] *Ceausescu Rejects Gorbachev Reforms and Keeps Romania on an Austere Road,* Soviet East European Report, Vol. IV, No. 15, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, March 1, 1987.

[30] Situation Report/8 (Romania) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, June 23, 1988).

[31] Quoted in Manuela Hoelterhoff, *Romania's Restructuring: No Perestroika,* The Wall Street Journal, May 19, 1988.

liberalization trends in the reform programs of the other East European countries, however, this program represents a step in the opposite direction.

Romanian "reform" also has featured frequent, haphazard reshuffling of personnel and even of whole bureaucracies. For example, in September 1987, presumably in an attempt to improve efficiency, the Ministry of Mining, Oil and Geology was split into three separate ministries, only 1 year after the three ministries were merged into one, for precisely the same reason. In the same month, the opposite action was applied to the Ministry of Chemistry and the Ministry of Petrochemical Industry. The two bodies were merged into a single Ministry of the Chemical and Petrochemical Industry—2 years after a ministry of the same name was split to form the Ministry of Chemistry and the Ministry of the Petrochemical Industry.[32]

**Political Reform**

Effective reform of Stalinist systems, which feature centralized, authoritarian bureaucracies, cannot be limited to the economic sphere. General Secretary Gorbachev's analysis of the current Soviet situation seems generally applicable to Eastern Europe, to the extent that the respective regimes of the region are still characterized by Stalinist economic and political institutions. As Gorbachev explained to the November 1988 Supreme Soviet session that undertook restructuring of the Soviet parliament, further progress in restructuring the economic system was being hindered by inadequate political institutions. "It is impossible," Gorbachev argued, "to break stagnation quickly without democratizing every aspect of our life and reviving the soviets (i.e., the national and local parliaments), making them . . . representative bodies of power and popular self-government."[33]

The roots of the problem, Gorbachev argued, can be traced to Stalinist policies of the early 1930's:

> It is now clear what immense costs—human, political, ideological and moral and not in the least material—our country paid as a result of the disruption of that process and the establishment since the early thirties of authoritarian methods of power, a system of bureaucratic command management. Mass repressions and other violations of socialist legality became widespread. The gradual removal of workers from real participation in running state and public affairs, the growing gap between the officially proclaimed democratic principles and the practice of the political process, the supplanting of representative bodies by the apparatus and its increasing bureaucratization and estrangement from the masses—all that resulted in the ossification of the political system.[34]

If Gorbachev's analysis is correct, one should find political reform in those countries where serious, sustained economic reform has been undertaken. A country-by-country review indicates that this generally has been the case.

*BULGARIA.* Neither economic nor political reform has taken hold in Bulgaria. The gap between words and deeds in the Bulgari-

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[32] SITUATION REPORT/11 (ROMANIA) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, October 15, 1987).
[33] Gorbachev to Supreme Soviet, quoted in FBIS-SOV-88-230, November 30, 1988.
[34] *Ibid.*

an regime's economic reform effort has been matched in its political reform effort. Todor Zhivkov and company seemed ahead of the Soviet Union when a July 1987 Central Committee Plenum called for shifting day-to-day decision-making from the party to the state apparatus. Even symbols of party influence would be eliminated: the Plenum called for removal of public portraits of party leaders, an end to parades and other "superfluous pomposity, megalomania and needless advance orchestration."[35]

The plenum asserted that henceforth "apart from (being) partners, the party and State bodies can also be opponents if necessary." The supreme authority in economic matters would be a rejuvenated parliament, made up of representatives of self- governing management groups and constituting the "collective working body for the self-management of society."[36]

The July 1987 plenum also called for a special Party Conference to be held in December of that year to further the restructuring process. Amidst rumors of a warning from Moscow that the Bulgarian political reform was going too fast and too far, the Party Conference was postponed until January 1988. Instead of boosting reform, the Conference essentially reaffirmed the Party's leading role. This caused speculation by outside observers that the main goal of the Conference may have been "to dampen expectations that drastic change would come to the nation."[37]

The economic proposals of the July 1987 plenum have been acted upon, according to Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty's assessment, "or at least further discussed and legislated; but its political proposals have in many cases been ignored, rejected, or deferred."[38] And after the failure of the January 1988 Party Conference to produce a program for political restructuring, according to analyst Stephen Ashley,

> regional electoral commissions defied central orders and refused to endorse a second candidate for some 80 percent of the seats in nationwide local government elections on February 1988. Almost no progress has been made in enacting the huge legislative program that the party approved at its various congresses and plenums in 1986 and 1987 . . . a commission to amend the constitution, set up in August 1987 . . . has not yet published a single report or proposal.[39]

Both economic and political reform were set back by leadership changes evidently orchestrated by Todor Zhivkov at the July 1988 Party Plenum. The most prominent of these was the removal from the leadership of Chudomir Alexandrov, a leading advocate of reform and widely believed to be most likely successor to Zhivkov. Others ousted from power included Stoyan Mikhailov, the Party Secretary in charge of ideology and culture (and reportedly respected by liberal intellectuals), and Central Committee members who organized an independent environmental committee. THE ECONOMIST put it succinctly: "When Bulgaria lost its would-be Gorbachev

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[35]Martin Sieff, *Gorbachev's Reforms Accepted in Bulgaria,"* THE WASHINGTON TIMES, August 12, 1987.

[36]*Ibid.*

[37]HELP AND ACTION NEWSLETTER, Spring 1988.

[38]SITUATION REPORT/2 (BULGARIA) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, February 11, 1988).

[39]*Ibid.*

this week, it also lost what little sense of direction there had been in the country's reforms."[40]

*CZECHOSLOVAKIA.* As noted above, economic restructuring has been announced but not significantly implemented in Czechoslovakia. Political restructuring has yet to appear on the horizon. The December 1987 replacement of Gustav Husak by Milos Jakes did not bode well for economic or political reform. Jakes opposed the Prague Spring reforms of 1968 and, in the aftermath of the Soviet-led invasion, was a key player in a major purge of the party. As THE ECONOMIST noted, he is known as "the man for all seasons except the spring."[41]

Subsequent leadership changes have done little to foster a reform atmosphere. An October 1988 Central Committee plenum produced changes in the Communist Party Presidium and Secretariat which, on the whole, seemed to solidify Jakes' position. Lubomir Strougal, one of the few leaders considered to have been relatively amenable to reform efforts, resigned as Prime Minister. Other changes, including the promotion of hardliner Jan Fojtik to the post of party ideologist, signalled continued opposition to radical political and economic reform. Although the resignation of arch-conservative Vasil Bilak was seen by some to balance the ouster of Strougal, the net result of these leadership changes was a retrenchment of anti-reformist elements, and an increase in the Czech presence in the federal system.

Nevertheless, Czechoslovakia is now confronting a deterioration of its economic well-being, an asset it has used since 1968 as part of its unwritten social contract with society: "we will ensure you live comfortably, and in return you will remain politically docile." As human rights activist Martin Palous said,

> After years when the situation in places like Poland was unthinkable here, people are suddenly beginning to think that we could be joining those long lines outside shops where there is nothing to buy. That's something very unsettling to people who have tried to ignore what was happening in the country all this time.[42]

The economic situation in Czechoslovakia is still considerably better than in Hungary, Poland or Romania. But the impact of economics on politics may be a key factor in the introduction of, or continued resistance to, Gorbachev-style restructuring. Timothy Garton Ash questions,

> (W)ithout their deep economic crises . . . would the Polish and Hungarian leaderships ever have felt compelled to launch such radical reforms? . . . [Can] you have political reform without economic crisis? Maybe Czechoslovakia will yet be the first to achieve that feat.[43]

*GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.* Erich Honecker and his colleagues in the GDR leadership have shown no enthusiasm for Gorbachev-style economic restructuring. Neither have they been enthusiastic about Gorbachev-style political reform. Indeed, the linkage between economic and political change evident in Gorba-

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[40] *Chop, Chop,* THE ECONOMIST, July 23, 1988, p. 45.
[41] *Men for a Rainy Communist Day,* THE ECONOMIST, September 3, 1988.
[42] Jackson Diehl, *In Spite of Itself, Czechoslovakia Accepts Changes,* THE WASHINGTON POST, December 19, 1988.
[43] Timothy Garton Ash, *The Prague Advertisement,* THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS, December 22, 1988.

chev's USSR appears to be reversed in the German Democratic Republic, where economic conservatism apparently feeds political conservatism. Gorbachev's speeches are printed only in summary form, and East German media have begun to carry the views of more conservative Soviet leaders and journalists on such issues as *glasnost*, cultural liberalization, and the reassessment of history.[44]

Gorbachev's plan to limit the tenure of elected party officials to two successive 5-year terms doubtless is particularly disturbing to GDR officials. Of the 160 members of the Socialist Unity Party's Central Committee, more than 100 have been there for longer than a decade, as have 12 of the 22 members of the Politburo. Willi Stoph, the current Prime Minister, has been a Politburo member since 1953, and Erich Honecker since 1958.[45] In short, the near-term prospect for political reform in the GDR is bleak.

*HUNGARY.* As have its economic reforms, Hungary's political reforms have predated by several years comparable reform efforts in the Soviet Union and other East European countries. For example, a new election law, enacted in 1983 and implemented in 1985, called for multiple candidates in 352 national parliamentary seats (leaving 35 seats uncontested, for "unopposed senior officials"). Candidates were not obligated to be members of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party but were required to accept the platform of the party-controlled Patriotic People's Front.

Implementation was not without blemishes. The party blocked election of several regime critics by packing election meetings with loyalists. Yet, as one of the opposition candidates later remarked, "Hundreds of thousands of people for the first time in their lives participated in a political something. It's not genuine politics, but it is something."[46]

The 1985 parliamentary elections in fact resulted in a more politicized, unpredictable parliament. About 55 percent of the deputies received less than 60 percent of the vote cast in their respective districts. And 25 deputies were elected thanks to direct nomination from the election-meeting floor.[47] The parliament has succeeded in making the regime-controlled Presidential Council, which acts while the parliament is not in session, more answerable to the parliament. In 1987, for the first time in recent Hungarian history, the parliament defeated a government proposal (to tax privately-owned vacation cottages).

Further reform steps were under consideration in 1988. A draft law on assembly and association generated speculation that the legal basis would be created for a multi-party system, but a July 1988 Central Committee plenum indicated that the traditional one-party system would be continued. Meanwhile, numerous political groups came into being in 1988, and party officials offered contradictory predictions as to the likelihood of a multi-party system, suggesting that the issue will remain alive.

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[44] BACKGROUND REPORT/60 (GDR) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, April 6, 1988).
[45] *A Ligachev Sort of Place*, THE ECONOMIST, July 9, 1988.
[46] *Hungary Experiments With Competitive Voting*, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, June 7, 1985.
[47] Barry Newman, *In Hungary, a Breath of Fresh Air Enters the Halls of Parliament*, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, January 29, 1988.

A turning point in the evolution of the Hungarian regime took place at the Party Conference in May 1988, when Karoly Grosz replaced Janos Kadar as Party General Secretary, eight Politburo members were retired, and six new members were added. Among the latter were two outspoken reformers, Rezso Nyers and Imre Pozsgay. Later in the year the youthful, reportedly reform-minded economist Miklos Nemeth was named Chairman of the Council of Ministers. As of the end of the year, the pro-reform wing of the party clearly had been strengthened.

*POLAND.* Political reform in Poland during the last 4 years should be evaluated in light of the dramatic events earlier in the decade. Imposition of martial law in December 1981 abruptly ended a period of reform and liberalization, symbolized by the appearance of the first independent trade union in Eastern Europe. Since that time, much of what might otherwise be considered political reform has, in the Polish context, amounted to a restoration of the pre-martial law situation.

This has tended to involve change in policy rather than in institutions. General Wojtech Jaruzelski has remained the *de facto* head of the country; the party remains largely moribund. The regime has made several attempts to regain the minimal support it had in 1981, among other things by creating a national front organization, the Patriotic Movement of National Rebirth (PRON); a new state-run trade union (OPZZ); and an advisory "Consultative Council." However, all of these efforts have been largely rejected by the opposition as half-way measures at best, and pure smoke and mirrors at worst.

Two debates heated up during the last year regarding potentially significant political changes. First, against a background of public discussion by the Polish leadership of broadening the level of political participation, the Government ombudsperson for civil rights, Dr. Ewa Letkowska, ruled that Polish law does not provide for the outlawing of political parties. Although government spokesperson Jerzy Urban has disputed her interpretation, a debate has grown over the possible re-introduction of genuinely independent political parties in Poland.

Second, there has been talk of adding a second chamber to the national parliament. In theory, such a chamber would not deal with issues relating to national security but could pass legislation regarding some economic and political issues. However, at the end of 1988 this project had not moved beyond the discussion stage.

The nature of the relationship between economic and political reform in Poland is unique to that country. Failed economic reform has repeatedly generated considerable discontent among the population. This discontent, in turn, threatens political stability. Perhaps with this in mind, the regime evidently opted to placate discontent by offering some concessions in the political arena, even though at the end of 1988 it had not moved ahead with the round-table talks it had agreed in August of that year to hold with the opposition. For example, Lech Walesa was permitted to debate Alfred Miodowicz, the head of the official trade union, on national television, and a lengthy interview with Walesa appeared recently

in POLYTIKA, the journal which Prime Minister Rakowski edited for over two decades.

*ROMANIA.* So long as Nicolae Ceausescu and his family remain in control of the regime, it doubtless will continue to oppose significant liberalization of any type. As noted, Ceausescu has publicly spurned the Gorbachev approach, charging that "radical changes" on the international stage have produced "all kinds of ideas and confusion, including mistrust in the forces of socialism."[48]

Continual shifts in personnel and what has been termed a "creeping militarization of Romania's politics" signify Ceausescu's determination to keep power centralized and under his personal control.[49] Massive changes in both party and government cadres in 1987 suggest Ceausescu may have come under pressure from functionaries within the regime to moderate his program of economic austerity. In any case, in 1988 Ceausescu's stance against reform stiffened further. He opted to eliminate even the facade of Party Central Committee participation in economic planning and development programs.[50] Only Ceausescu and his immediate family—including his wife, son, and brother—remain secure in their positions of power. Discontent probably is widespread both within society and the regime, yet there appears to be no significant organized opposition to Ceausescu's rule.

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[48]Quoted in SITUATION REPORT/8 (ROMANIA) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, June 23, 1988).

[49]*Ibid.*

[50]*Ibid.*

# RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

## General Trends

Human rights trends in the six East European countries have been far from uniform during the period since March 1985. Notable changes have occurred in the relationship between the four major players in these countries: regime, church, opposition, and private citizens.

Some regimes (Hungary and Poland) have gradually withdrawn from an active ideological indoctrination of their citizens, tacitly granting legitimacy to competing ideologies, allowing citizens to retreat into private life, and easing the situation of human rights activists. On the other hand, conditions for such activists have become even more difficult in Romania over the past 4 years, as Ceausescu continues to maintain a totalitarian regime and Romanian citizens have meager opportunities for life outside of official bounds. Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic have, for the most part, maintained the *status quo* with conditions for human rights activists remaining by-and-large poor in these countries.

Conditions may not be uniform, but East European aspirations became increasingly so during this period. The societies in all these countries were touched to varying degrees in the mid-1980's by the same developments: a religious revival, the peace and environmental movements, and trans-border outreach among independent activists. A wave of renewed religiosity throughout Eastern Europe has increased citizens' contacts with churches and caused the churches to search for new ways to serve the faithful. Peace and environmental movements have sprung up, and activists in these as well as in human rights fields have developed ties with colleagues in other East European countries, in the Soviet Union and the West.

## Regime Initiatives

The sphere of civil society is gradually expanding in the countries of Eastern Europe, with the exception of Ceausescu's Romania. The state no longer has a monopoly on all spheres of life as it did in the 1950's and, to a lesser extent, in the decades following. The retreat to private life that has been marked in these countries is becoming tempered as citizens seek to act in the interests of society as a whole and their communities, as well as in their own personal interest. Polish historian and philosopher Adam Michnik speaks of the possibility of "living in dignity." Czechoslovak playwright Vaclav Havel speaks of the importance of "living in truth." At the same time as citizens have seized more control over their

lives, the Bulgarian, Czechoslovak, Hungarian and Polish regimes have established new mechanisms to decrease the arbitrariness of their rule and thus maintain their credibility with society. With the exception of the Polish initiatives, all are too new to permit evaluation of their effectiveness.

In June 1988, a Public Committee on Human Rights was founded in Bulgaria. Among its stated purposes is defense of citizens whose rights had been violated by state organs, public organizations or public officials. Also, a special working commission of the Committee was established to review the Bulgarian Constitution from the perspective of human rights.[1] Shortly after these developments, a new law on citizen compensation for official mistreatment was adopted in the Bulgarian National Assembly. The legislation, slated to come into force on January 1, 1989, set out procedures for the redress of damage caused by wrongful arrest, detention or sentencing, or the compulsory and unnecessary administration of medical treatment. Moreover, the law stated that the media had a responsibility to publicize the innocence of a citizen wrongfully arrested, convicted or sentenced, if the media had proclaimed that citizen's guilt.

Czechoslovakia likewise has established a General Public Committee for Human Rights and Humanitarian Cooperation, the aim of which is to provide a channel for public participation in policy-making and implementation, as well as evaluation of the existing legal code.[2]

Hungarian authorities recently have promised a whole series of reforms to broaden citizens' participation in their government, as well as to institutionalize human rights advances. The regime foresees the imminent creation of new channels for citizen participation, including referenda and an ombudsperson looking out for citizens' interests. Also under discussion, but clearly the subject of leadership debate, is the creation of truly independent political parties along lines that are to be determined in the 1990 Hungarian Constitution.

Of all the East European states, Poland has experimented most with new forms of government involving unofficial representation. In September 1986, Jaruzelski called upon the opposition to abandon underground activity and sought the church's support for a new social council of political independents, church laypeople and moderate Solidarity activists that would advise the Council of State. In December of that year, the regime formed a "Social Consultative Council" to advise General Jaruzelski. While still active, the Social Consultative Council never evolved into a force to be reckoned with; its members could talk about solutions to Poland's problems, but none of its recommendations has ever been adopted by the regime. This is the situation that Poland's opposition had feared, and so the Council never enjoyed the opposition's support. Nevertheless, the Council achieved a first in Polish political life: from the beginning of its existence, the minutes of its proceedings have been published in uncensored form.

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[1] FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE-EASTERN EUROPE (*hereinafter* FBIS-EEU)-88-237, December 9, 1988, p. 10.

[2] FBIS-EEU-88-239, December 13, 1988, p. 13.

In an attempt to solicit support for price increases—and thereby avoid the political upheavals which had accompanied previous price hikes in Poland—the Government held the first referendum in 40 years in November 1987, as noted above. In one of the most interesting East European strategies to deal with human rights questions, the Polish Government in January 1988 appointed Dr. Ewa Letkowska as an ombudsperson to protect citizens' rights against administrative and legal injustices.

**Political Prisoners**

The continuing incarceration of prisoners of conscience, including Helsinki monitors, attests to East European regimes' determination to restrict their citizens in such areas as freedom of expression, conscience and movement. Numbers of political prisoners in Eastern Europe are hard to fix, but they number in the hundreds in each of the countries except Hungary and Poland.

In Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, and Romania, a large number of citizens who sought to flee their countries have been imprisoned. In the German Democratic Republic and Romania even those who have openly protested official refusal of emigration applications have been subject to arrest and imprisonment.

Several amnesties in Eastern Europe, the traditional method of thinning prisoner populations in the region, freed a number of political prisoners during the period under review. In the fall of 1987, the German Democratic Republic declared a general amnesty to mark its 38th anniversary. The amnesty covered all prisoners except those convicted of murder, espionage, and war or Nazi crimes. This resulted in the release of 24,621 prisoners between October and December, including virtually all political prisoners. However, according to FRG sources, East German authorities have since incarcerated hundreds of political prisoners, including many would-be emigrants. FRG officials estimate that the number of political prisoners in the German Democratic Republic reached about 1,800 in 1988.[3]

The fourth in a series of post-martial law amnesties took place in Poland in the summer of 1986. Steadily, scores of prisoners, including long-held prominent activists, were released, seemingly without condition. In a surprise move on September 11 of that year, Polish Interior Minister Kiszczak announced that all persons "sentenced and/or under arrest for offenses and transgressions against the state and public order" would be released. Fugitive activists were given until the end of the year to come out of hiding. By mid-September 1986, virtually all of Poland's prisoner of conscience—some 225 persons—were summarily freed.

Romanian officials declared several limited amnesties during the period under review. An amnesty in January 1988 freed a much higher number of people than usual, including prisoner of conscience Victor Opris, a Pentecostal Pastor, and political activists

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[3] *Weekly Record of Events*, MISCELLANEOUS (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, December 9, 1988).

Ion Bugan and Gheorghe Nastescu. Charges against Nelu Prodan, an activist lawyer specializing in the defense of the rights of religious believers, were dropped in connection with the amnesty. Prodan had been taken into custody for 12 days in December and charged with accepting bribes. He subsequently received permission to emigrate and has settled with his family in the United States.

Internal exile and house arrest are two other methods East European authorities have used to silence critics. In Bulgaria, Grigor Simov Bozhilov, who signed a human rights appeal to the Vienna Review Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, was detained and sent into internal exile in a northeastern village; he was released in November 1988. Several Romanian citizens, including Cluj-based dissident Doina Cornea, have been under virtually continuous house arrest. Mail and telephone service to some Romanian activists is cut intermittently to increase their isolation not only from the outside world, but also from contacts inside the country. Repeated interrogations likewise confirm the close surveillance under which activists are held in Romania, even if they are not in custody.

These and other less visible means of controlling dissent have become predominant in Eastern Europe during the past several years. The Czechoslovak, Hungarian, and Polish authorities have, for example, adopted the practice of levying high fines on citizens as punishment for attempting to exercise their rights.

## Human Rights Activism

In March 1988, over 400 citizens from Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary and Poland, as well as from the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, sent an appeal to the Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe calling for the 35 signatory states to respect their citizens' right to conscientious objection and alternative service. The appeal was symbolic of the region-wide increase in human rights activism throughout the past few years.

One impetus to all the activists in Eastern Europe has been CPSU General Secretary Gorbachev's example of calling for basic systemic reform featuring active individual participation in economic and political decision-making. Another important impetus was the unofficial peace movement that had swept Western Europe in the early years of the decade and gradually seeped into Eastern Europe. The year 1985 saw the emergence of the conscientious objection issue as an integral part of the peace and human rights movement. In that year the Czechoslovak human rights group Charter 77, in response to the West European peace movement, asserted a link between human rights and peace by stating,

> Only citizens living in freedom and dignity can guarantee the freedom and self-determination of nations. Only autonomous nations can build Europe into an association of equal partners which will not threaten the

world with the danger of a global war, but which will be an example of genuine peaceful coexistence.[4]

An important inspiration to the East European human rights movement in this period was the Budapest Cultural Forum, held in October and November 1985 under the aegis of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the accompanying independent symposium held during the Cultural Forum under the auspices of the umbrella nongovernmental International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights. While this symposium was not permitted by Hungarian authorities to take place in a public forum, it was nevertheless attended by prominent writers from several different countries, and was the first meeting of private citizens from East and West to discuss human rights issues. Subsequent independent human rights conferences took place in Poland, Hungary and the USSR in following years. The most recent was the August 1988 Krakow human rights meeting, sponsored by Solidarity's Intervention and Lawfulness Commission and the independent Polish pacifist and environmental group Freedom and Peace, and attended by over 1,000 participants, including 240 from abroad.

*BULGARIA.* In Bulgaria, growing sensitivity to environmental problems has brought together a broad-based coalition encompassing members of the public, party and state officials. One of the most serious environmental problems, and one that has received Bulgarian media attention, is chlorine pollution in the city of Ruse, which stems from a chemical factory across the Danube in Giurgiu, Romania. This and other environmental problems have spawned various informal ecological groups, including an environmentalist committee in Ruse.

Popular protests on this theme in Bulgaria have included spontaneous demonstrations, public meetings and appeals, and have attracted support from intellectuals and public officials. Central Committee member and former Chairman of the Artists' Union Svetlin Rusev, who was one of the leaders of the independent environmentalist group in Ruse, was dismissed from the Central Committee as was Sonya Todorova (wife of National Assembly Chairman Stanko Todorov), who was active in calling attention to the environmental situation in the spring of 1988.

These measures may have stemmed from the fear that independent associations might have a negative impact on Bulgaria's relations with other states. In any case, the official Bulgarian response to the wave of environmentally motivated protests was to publish a decision on the future of environmental activity in Bulgaria that emphasized renewed dependence on centralized political controls and a rejection of popular criticism.

In the latter part of the period under review, three small but potentially significant manifestations of human rights activism occurred in Bulgaria. In February 1987, seven Bulgarian citizens signed an open letter to the Vienna CSCE Follow-Up Meeting, asking that the meeting not conclude until all European peoples could exercise basic rights. The letter also called for the creation of

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[4]U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, *The Prague Appeal,* HUMAN RIGHTS CZECHOSLOVAKIA: THE DOCUMENTS OF CHARTER 77 (1982-1987) (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1988) p. 167.

a permanent European Intergovernmental Commission to monitor human rights violations among Helsinki signatories. The signatories of the appeal were later detained and interrogated for periods lasting from several hours to over a month. As of December 1988, one signatory, Grigor Simov Bozhilov, remained in internal exile in a village in northeastern Bulgaria.

In January 1988, the "Independent Association for the Protection of Human Rights in Bulgaria" was established in that country. Over 100 people are believed to support the organization, although only a much smaller number of individuals have openly associated themselves with it. The Association's stated goal is to assist the regime in its declared aim to improve human rights conditions. The Association has called for the abrogation of clauses in the Criminal Code that penalize human rights activity, cessation of the forced assimilation of ethnic Turks, and collection of information on human rights abuses in Bulgaria. In February, Eduard Genov, one of the members, was sentenced to 2 years in internal exile; in October he was released, and he has since emigrated to the West. Other members of the group have been the targets of police surveillance. In November 1988, the Government issued passports to several leading members of the group and informed them they were free to leave Bulgaria. The group currently is seeking official recognition and registration as an independent human rights organization.

Finally, recent reports indicate that some 80 members of the Bulgarian intelligentsia formed an independent group in November 1988. The group is calling on the Government to speedup reforms in Bulgaria.

*CZECHOSLOVAKIA.* Unofficial groups have become more active in Czechoslovakia in recent years. Charter 77's manifestos to other peace groups in Western and Eastern Europe were accompanied by suggestions to the Czechoslovak regime for reforms in military service requirements. In 1985, for example, Charter 77 proposed to the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly that Czechoslovakia follow the example of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany and shorten mandatory military service from 24 to 18 months. The Charter also suggested that like neighboring countries, Czechoslovakia should establish an alternative form of service for those citizens whose consciences or religion made it morally impossible for them to bear arms.

In April 1988, five Czechoslovak citizens previously unassociated with opposition activity announced the establishment of an Independent Peace Association. The Association was to be an "open gathering of people who are not indifferent to the future of mankind and the nation and who understand the positive shift in world history . . . as a challenge for and commitment to civic and personal engagement." In their declaration, the signatories called on Czechoslovak authorities to "demilitarize society, promote overall *glasnost*, and make efforts to strengthen peace and confidence among nations." The future of this organization is uncertain.[5] In

[5]SITUATION REPORT/8 (CZECHOSLOVAKIA) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, June 3, 1988).

October 1988 a new citizens' group, the Initiative for Social Defense, was established in Prague. Its aims echo those of the veteran human rights groups Charter 77 and VONS, but the Initiative members hope to be able also "to assist individual citizens, to contribute to the renewal of legal conscience and thus to serve the general interests of our society."[6]

*GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.* Liberalized practice concerning conscientious objection has outpaced legislation in the German Democratic Republic. As of the mid-1980's, those who based their conscientious objection on religious grounds were permitted to perform alternative service in construction units, although they were required to take the military oath. Those opposed to any military service whatsoever were incarcerated. For the past 3 years, however, East German authorities reportedly have not imprisoned men who have refused to perform either military service or service in construction units. The last arrests were made in the fall of 1985. The approximately 50 men incarcerated for conscientious objection then were released soon after the Evangelical Church made an appeal on their behalf.

An increasing number of demonstrations beginning in the fall of 1987, coupled with a renewed and determined official clampdown on dissent, signaled the opening of a new chapter in GDR human rights developments. No longer was the freedom to emigrate the clearly preeminent human rights goal in the German Democratic Republic; the prospect of reforms in the Soviet Union clearly has whetted East German society's appetite for reforms at home. Gorbachev and his ideas have found a warm popular reception, especially among the young people of the German Democratic Republic.

A dwindling number of activists left in the country, after the majority of their colleagues emigrated to the West, have kept the GDR peace movement alive. Their outspoken pacifism and their human rights publication GRENZFALL ("BORDERLINE CASE") worried GDR authorities to such an extent, that in November 1987 they staged a dramatic midnight raid on an ecological library housed in Berlin's Zion Church basement, where the publication was said to be printed. Authorities confiscated printing equipment, and detained and interrogated two members of a peace and ecological group. Numerous interrogations and house arrests followed elsewhere in Berlin, and sympathizers of the group were called in for questioning in other GDR cities. Those arrested were freed within a few days, but the charges against them of "assembling for the pursuance of anti-constitutional activities" were not withdrawn.

The relationship between dissidents and authorities subsequently worsened. In January 1988, dissidents joined an officially organized SED (Socialist Unity Party) march to commemorate the murders of prewar Socialists Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg and carried signs with such slogans as Luxemburg's "Freedom is always the freedom of those who think differently." Some dissidents had been arrested before they could join the rally; 100 were arrested afterwards.

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[6]Report from VONS, Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted, October 11, 1988, translated by Mrs. Anna Faltus.

A wave of sympathy for the imprisoned activists underlined how much the atmosphere in the German Democratic Republic had changed: for the first time, dissidents enjoyed the widespread support of East German society, which took part in prayer meetings and organized national and international protests. Some dissidents were expelled immediately to the Federal Republic of Germany; others were threatened with long prison sentences if they would not emigrate; still others received shorter sentences and after their release from prison were deported from the country as well. Only two were allowed to retain their GDR citizenship.

The protests continued well into 1988, focusing on a range of human rights issues. In March, about 300 protesters marched in Leipzig to demand greater freedom and the right to emigrate. The protesters chose the time of the annual international trade fair, and the police did not interfere.

*HUNGARY.* The Hungarian regime has generally responded to citizen activism by broadening the freedom of association. The main area of controversy has involved independent publishing activities by regime opponents. Harassment of individuals involved in this activity, which had intensified in the early 1980's, continued off and on during the period under review. Beginning in early 1986, numerous apartments were searched, a number of publications and manuscripts were confiscated, and several individuals were detained and heavily fined for violating Hungarian press laws.

A new press law went into effect in Hungary on September 1, 1986. The law had some liberal provisions, such as those requiring more unclassified information to be released to the public. Overall, however, the law allowed for, if it did not justify, continued actions against independent publishers. Government approval is still needed to publish and is given only to recognized organizations. Authorities can prevent the dissemination of information that threatens Hungary's vaguely defined constitutional order, international interests (i.e., relations with the Soviet Union or possibly the Hungarian minorities) or public morals.

Throughout 1987 and 1988, confiscation of independently published materials and subsequent imposition of fines were less common. A major exception was in March 1988, when raids of several apartments led to the confiscation of independent publications, a word processor and 10 typewriters. (The equipment was eventually returned.) For the most part, however, the denial of passports became the most visible form of punishment for dissenting activity. Some individuals have been continually denied permission to travel abroad, even after passage of a liberalized passport law.

Another area of controversy has been the regime response to large-scale public demonstrations. Two major demonstrations were broken up in Hungary in 1986: an "environmental walk" organized by the Danube Circle in February, and an unofficial demonstration on March 15, the day when Hungarians commemorate the 1848 Revolution. A possible cause for the particularly harsh treatment the demonstrators received, especially the several hundred-strong group on March 15, was a regime decision to serve warning that large demonstrations commemorating the 30th anniversary of the 1956 Revolution later in the year would not be tolerated. A year

later, unofficial demonstrators experienced little harassment from the authorities.

Ten thousand people took to the streets on March 15, 1988 calling for democracy and press freedoms. Authorities arrested eight members of the opposition, who were held in a prison outside Budapest. On June 16, a smaller group of Hungarians sought to mark the 30th anniversary of the execution of Imre Nagy and others involved in the 1956 Revolution. A ceremony at the cemetery where the executed are believed to be buried, as well as commemorative events at a church and theater, were tolerated, all for the first time. Public gatherings at several locations around Budapest, however, led to police action against demonstrators and the beating of some of them. Other demonstrations, such as the one protesting the Danube Dam, and another on June 27 to protest the treatment of the Hungarian minority in Romania, took place without police intervention.

The draft law on associations applies to demonstrations, rallies and similar events. The holding of such public events requires prior announcement of the date, venue, purpose, agenda, number of participants and names of organizers. It also says that the "holding of an event can be officially forbidden only in cases stipulated by the law, and organizers will be free to appeal to the court against the prohibition."[7] As with the right of association, the right of assembly may be given a greater legal basis, but the Government evidently will reserve the right to prevent public events if it deems this necessary.

Some 100 conscientious objectors were reported to be in prison in late 1987. In August 1988, however, the newspaper MAGYAR HIRLAP announced that some form of alternative service would be introduced in Hungary in 1989, probably allowing service to be performed in the public health or another social sector.

Beginning in the fall of 1987, the Hungarian regime showed a greater overall willingness to tolerate independent activity, first by allowing for the establishment of private foundations which could hire employees and own property. Such entities must be approved by an appropriate "state supervisory body" and must place their assets in the National Savings Bank. Most of the foundations, which number well over 100, focus on cultural affairs such as funding historical research or promoting and preserving the Hungarian language through grants, prizes and scholarships.

Early 1988 saw increased calls for a more liberal approach to the formation of independent groups in Hungary. Like foundations, associations of citizens must obtain approval from a supervisory agency, normally a ministry, before they have any legal status, and registration can be removed if "the association's goals are incompatible with the state, social and economic order."[8]

Among the first of many such initiatives in Hungary was the creation of the Democratic Forum, a loose affiliation of intellectuals with strong populist overtones created in September 1987. The Network of Free Initiatives, now known as the Alliance of Free Democrats, was founded in early 1988 and has a very broad focus. It

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[7]FBIS-EEU-88-149, August 3, 1988, p. 16.
[8]SITUATION REPORT/2 (HUNGARY) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research), February 15, 1988.

serves as an umbrella organization providing coordination for disparate groups.

In the spring of 1988, a number of other groups was founded. They based their legality not on approval by a supervisory body but on the right of association as expressed in the Hungarian Constitution. Among them are the Democratic Union of Scientific and Academic Workers (TDDSZ) and a youth group, the Federation of Young Democrats (FIDESZ), which has challenged the dominant role of the existing, official Communist Youth League (KISZ). The legal status of these groups is very much in question, and FIDESZ has been under pressure to disband. These are the first independent unions to be launched in Eastern Europe since the banning of Solidarity.

The existence of these broadened groups has brought a new era to dissent in Hungary. Well-organized, and generally considered moderate in their orientation, they have an intellectual appeal that has drawn considerable sympathy from reformers working within the system. They have also provided a forum for a much broader expression of views than had previously been the case, and their numbers have made it somewhat safer to express these views. Moreover, their toleration by the authorities, although perhaps not without some reluctance, indicates that the level of acceptable debate in the country will likely continue to increase in the future.

The major threat to this trend at the present is the questionable legal base of these spontaneous organizations. In the past year, there have been calls for a new law on associations, which is currently in the draft stage. Citizens reportedly will be able to setup organizations or associations as long as they do "not violate the security of the state, public security, law and order, and public morality, and should not be detrimental to public health and other people's liberties."[9] The extent to which the authorities will use these caveats to limit the formation of new groups is unknown, but the existence of such caveats demonstrates continued official concern over the spread of independent activity.

*POLAND.* Strikes have been a traditional manifestation of popular activism for many years. This phenomenon was well-illustrated by the events of 1988. In April and May 1988, strikes broke out from the Baltic to the Tatra mountains, involving thousands of workers from at least a half dozen factories and lasting for over 2 weeks. The workers' demands were both political and economic. Since the workers did not trust the Government to implement economic reform effectively, they demanded wage increases to offset the price hikes which are part of the on-going attempt to stabilize the country's rampant inflation and $38 million-plus foreign debt.

At the same time, the workers called for political changes which would engender trust in the Government and make swallowing the necessary hardships of economic reform easier. In the end, the authorities resisted most of the political demands, such as the legalization of Solidarity, but generally caved in on the economic ones. While the regime and the opposition once again proved that each can frustrate the progress of the other, the strikes did not succeed

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[9]FBIS-EEU-88-149, August 3, 1988, p. 16.

in bringing Poland any closer to a resolution of its long-standing problems.

A "Freedom and Peace" group was founded in Poland in 1985. The organization coalesced from a number of people protesting the imprisonment of a student who had received a 2½ year prison sentence for refusing to take a military oath pledging to uphold Poland's fraternal alliance with the Soviet Union. In May 1987, Freedom and Peace held an open seminar, "International Peace and the Helsinki Agreement," attended by peace and human rights activists from 17 countries East and West. About 10 Freedom and Peace members were in prison as of January 1988.

In June and July 1988, the Polish Sejm (parliament) adopted two pieces of legislation in the area of conscientious objection. The first modified the military oath so that it no longer required soldiers to pledge to fight alongside the Soviet Union. Also, instead of swearing loyalty to the Communist Government, in the future soldiers will pledge allegiance to the Polish nation. The second was an amendment to the law on military service so that recruits may be permitted to perform alternative service on conscientious grounds. This resulted in the release of nearly 100 conscientious objectors from prison.

Another encouraging development was the reestablishment in September 1988 of the Polish chapter of PEN, the international writers' association. PEN had been banned after the December 1981 introduction of martial law. In recent months, Polish authorities have registered a number of political discussion clubs that openly describe themselves as political oppositionists.[10] As the regime continues to reject roundtable discussions with Solidarity representatives, placing limits on the freedom of association as it pertains to trade unions, it appears to be widening the latitude for other independent voices in Poland.

*ROMANIA.* The most improbable and unexpected instances of human rights activism took place in the Romanian city of Brasov in November 1987. Fueled by desperation, thousands of workers marched from their factory to the local party headquarters demanding food and freedom. The riots were triggered by new wage cuts imposed on workers who were already suffering under what were possibly the worst economic conditions in Europe.

A chain reaction reportedly followed the Brasov events: workers' and students' solidarity demonstrations in Brasov and Timisoara, strikes in Sibiu, Braila and Constanta, and manifestoes and appeals by individuals and groups supporting the Brasov workers' grievances. But Brasov was more than a watershed in Romanian human rights activism: it occasioned an even more repressive stance by the regime. In an interview with the Italian Communist Party paper, the former secretary of a Communist Youth Union organization in a Romanian village stated, "You have no idea how terrible repression has become in the wake of that revolt."[11]

An undetermined number of people, variously estimated from several hundred to 2,000, was detained after the riots in Brasov. It

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[10] SITUATION REPORT/16 (POLAND) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, October 7, 1988).
[11] SITUATION REPORT/10 (ROMANIA) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, August 23, 1988).

is not known how long they were detained or whether any still remain in custody. According to some diplomats, about 60 protesters were given jail terms, and others were sent to work in the coal mines.[12] Some of the protesters reportedly have disappeared, although the disappearances remain unconfirmed.

The Romanian protests took place against a backdrop of intensified restrictions on freedom of expression. Silviu Brucan, a retired diplomat and senior party official, was placed under house arrest in early December, after he made critical public statements following the Brasov riots. In April 1988, at least two Romanian citizens, Nicolae Stancescu and Mihai Pavelescu, were arrested and held for granting interviews critical of regime policies to foreign journalists. Four others were said to be arrested in Iasi after participating in such interviews.

Yet repression cannot stem desperation. As dissident Liviu Cangeopol put it, "The present situation is characterised by a paralyzing fear . . . . Pressure is exerted upon all of us, the pressure of force directed against common sense. It drives everyone into opposition . . . Everyone is longing for change."[13]

While the scope and intensity of the Brasov riots were unprecedented in Romania in this decade, they were not isolated incidents. The worsening economic situation has compelled disparate social groups in Romania to find common ground, and hence repression has increased in such towns as Iasi where citizens have found a commonality of purpose and expressed it openly.

Radio Free Europe has reported that a group calling itself Romanian Democratic Action, consisting of some 20 young people, emerged in Romania in the latter part of 1987. Its 40-page political program and subsequent documents call for the introduction of a democratic, pluralist regime in Romania, based on freedom and respect for the individual. Unlike independent groups elsewhere in Eastern Europe, Romanian Democratic Action is conspiratorial by necessity. It is based on a small network of people who claim they know each other only by pseudonyms.

In the summer of 1988, seven former Romanian prisoners of conscience issued a human rights appeal to the Vienna Follow-up Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The appeal was all-embracing, setting out goals in the areas of workers' and peasants' rights, minority rights, the right to freedom of movement into and out of the country, and access to foreign media. The appeal also called for official recognition of the right to form human rights defense groups and an end to censorship. In short, the former prisoners of conscience urged Romanian leaders to follow through on their commitments embodied in the Helsinki Final Act.[14]

Other Romanian citizens act individually or in loose-knit groups, speaking out and asking for the support of fellow Romanian citizens and the international community. In August 1988, Doina Cornea, a French language professor in Cluj who was forced to retire early as a result of her activism, issued together with a

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[12]Charles T. Powers, *Romania—Tight Rule of a "Deity,"* Los Angeles Times, May 9, 1988.
[13]Help and Action Bulletin, Summer 1988, p. 69.
[14]Situation Report/9 (Romania) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, July 20, 1988).

dozen other Romanian citizens an open letter to President Ceausescu. The letter was an eloquent defense of Romanian human rights and culture, especially as they are under grave threat by Ceausescu's *sistematizare* program.

**Trans-Border Cooperation**

As independent organizations have intensified their activities in the East European countries, so have they strengthened ties with others, East and West. A number of issues have galvanized East European citizens and given them an impetus toward action alone, in groups, and across borders. Moreover, in most of the countries, a greater level of political tolerance, improved telephone communications and decreasing restrictions on travel have facilitated increased trans-border contacts between activists. Hungarian dissident Miklos Haraszti noted that in this era, "For the first time there is the chance of a region-wide movement for reform rather than a process in just one country like Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Poland in 1980."[15]

Such trans-border cooperation began with a series of appeals from East European groups for mutual support. For instance, the Danube Circle, an independent Hungarian environmental advocacy group founded in 1984, appealed to Charter 77 to raise in Czechoslovakia the issue of the Gabcikovo-Nagymaros Hydroelectric Dam across the Danube, a project it considers ecologically threatening and economically dubious. Charter 77 appealed to the regime in turn to reconsider the dam, taking into account its harmful environmental consequences, and publicized the Danube Circle's original appeal.

The first significant instance of cooperation involving citizens from more than two East European countries was the October 1986 appeal to mark the 30th anniversary of the Hungarian uprising, and to call for the restoration of democracy in Eastern Europe. Activists from five countries signed the appeal. Independent international conferences of dissidents followed in Warsaw in May 1987 and in Budapest later that summer. In the same year dissidents from Poland and Czechoslovakia, meeting on the border between their countries, agreed to form a joint organization.

On January 2, 1988, Charter 77 issued an appeal to citizens to join in a coordinated protest of the Romanian regime's severe austerity measures. On February 1, dissidents in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary joined in demonstrations and vigils outside the Romanian Embassies in their respective capitals. Police in Warsaw and Prague broke up the demonstrations and detained a number of participants. Soviet activists, including Academician Sakharov, likewise issued a statement of support. That month dissidents in the same four countries also issued an appeal for support of the human rights activists in the German Democratic Republic who had been jailed and subsequently deported to the West.

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[15]Quoted in Jackson Diehl, *East Bloc Activists Coordinate Protests*, THE WASHINGTON POST, February 2, 1988.

Stronger ties across borders have made already skittish East European regimes even more nervous about independent activities by their citizens. In the fall of 1988, the Hungarian regime banned a Budapest demonstration planned to mark the November 15 anniversary of the 1987 Brasov workers' uprising in neighboring Romania. Officials explained their action by citing planned parallel demonstrations in other countries that day-which were unequivocally directed against the Romanian regime. Moreover, they feared provocations that could further damage already badly bruised Hungarian-Romanian ties.

**Religious Rights**

One marked trend of the 1985-88 period was the renewal of religious activism in Eastern Europe, particularly among youth. A religious revival which started in the last decade has been evident in Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania. This revival has led to a retreat by citizens into religious life and, more recently, to their growing engagement through their church activity in the pressing issues that East European regimes traditionally have guarded as their own province: peace, the environment, and human rights.

This new-found activism has also had an effect on several of the churches in the region, some of which have found themselves in the role of mediators, advocates of moderation, and even protectors of private citizens and their causes. Majority churches in Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary and Poland play a significant, independent role in the life of their respective countries. In Bulgaria and Romania, where religious life is dominated by the majority Orthodox churches, which traditionally are subservient to the state, the churches play virtually no independent role.

Churches and believers throughout Eastern Europe are significantly limited in their activities by regime regulations. All regimes require churches to be registered to obtain official recognition. In most instances, official recognition is necessary for churches to acquire buildings, hire prelates and obtain religious literature. Penalties for activities by unrecognized churches have been high. A variety of administrative mechanisms, including limitations on seminary admissions and licensing of prelates, tends to restrict clergymen to those acceptable to the regime. Open proselytizing is banned in all six East European states; church-sponsored religious education for children is banned in all except Hungary and Poland.

*BULGARIA.* The Bulgarian regime has maintained tight control over religious activities, especially restricting the religious affairs of Bulgaria's Turkish minority. Many mosques have been closed, and rites such as traditional Muslim circumcision, weddings and burials are restricted or forbidden outright. Many Muslim graveyards have been obliterated. The Koran is not published locally and cannot be imported. Pentecostalists have also been restricted in their activities. For example, Reverend Pavel Ignatov of the Pentecostalist Church of God was arrested in January 1987 for operating a church without official permission, after years of unsuccessful efforts to obtain such permission.

*CZECHOSLOVAKIA.* The growing strength among believers in Eastern Europe has been strikingly evident in the pilgrimages and church celebrations that have taken place in Czechoslovakia during the past 3 years. In April 1985, over 1,000 Catholic priests gathered at Velehrad for the opening celebration of the 1,100th anniversary of the death of St. Methodius. The celebration continued in July, when 150,000 Czechoslovak Catholics participated in the Velehrad pilgrimage, the largest religious gathering in postwar Czechoslovak history. Many instances of restriction of religious rights took place around the pilgrimage, including the state's withdrawal of licenses from three priests. Several church dignitaries from abroad, including Pope John Paul II, were refused permission to come to the country for the pilgrimage.

The mass pilgrimages have continued, with participants numbering up to half a million by 1987. The state has reacted with harassment and occasional detention of participants. In March 1988, authorities brutally broke up a candlelight Catholic rally in Bratislava, using tear gas, water cannons and police dogs and arresting 190 participants. A July 1988 pilgrimage at the shrine of Levoca, however, was unimpeded by the state, and state-run television even offered brief coverage of the event.

The clearest symbol of awakened religious activism in Czechoslovakia was the December 1987 31-point petition demanding religious freedom. By June 1988, over 500,000 Catholics, including Cardinal Tomasek, Protestants, Jews and non-believers had signed the petition, defying a hostile regime press campaign against it.

*GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.* The German Democratic Republic's majority Evangelical Church has long enjoyed a great deal of autonomy from the state, more than any East European church apart from the Polish Catholic Church. The Evangelical Church has served as a sounding board and transmission belt between citizens and the regime. In the past few years, church activists have taken advantage of the good relations between church and state to expand the limits of what is officially permitted. In September 1987, a church-organized peace march of about 1,000 people was the first unlicensed but officially tolerated independent public demonstration in GDR history. Increasingly the GDR Evangelical Church has adopted the role of protector, sheltering peace, environmental, human rights and emigration activists.

The church has paid a heavy price for its new, more confrontational role. As mentioned above, in November 1987, authorities raided the environmental library housed in East Berlin's Zion Church, confiscating printing and duplicating machines as well as independently published materials. Apparently the operation was directed against the outspoken human rights and pacifist monthly publication GRENZFALL ("BORDERLINE CASE"), which was said to have been printed in the library. Thus the church—the one place in GDR society where groups had been able to gather without official approval—was for the first time in recent memory directly trespassed upon by the regime. As a renewed official campaign against would-be emigrants and other dissidents gained momentum early in 1988, protesters gathered in churches for prayer meetings;

several hundred were detained entering and leaving these meetings.

While the regime has permitted and even encouraged large church assemblies, it has also engaged in blatant censorship of some church publications, postponing and even banning their appearance. In the fall of 1988, GDR officials were reported to have accused the church of "promoting the work of the West."[16] Censorship has become a high-profile issue for discussion at recent ecumenical meetings and protests in the German Democratic Republic. In October 1988, about 50 of 200 young people participating in a silent protest against censorship of church publications were briefly detained in East Berlin.

*HUNGARY.* The Hungarian regime has exhibited increased tolerance for religion, including for smaller denominations that previously encountered difficulties, during the period under review. This development is, perhaps, a consequence of the fact that in Hungary, churches have not become centers of dissent. The Hungarian regime recently granted recognition to the Mormons and the Nazarenes. However, the Faith Christian Fellowship has continued to experience official harassment, including the breaking-up of a worship service by police in 1986.

*POLAND.* The Polish Catholic Church blazed the way for East European churches to be political as well as moral forces to be reckoned with by states. The centuries-old repository of Polish national traditions, it also has been a shelter for political dissenters. While home today to a number of dissident clerics, the Catholic Church has come to occupy a vital middle ground in Polish society, mediating and encouraging compromise between oppositionists and the regime.

*ROMANIA.* The Ceausescu regime has maintained tight controls over all manifestations of religion. Romanian churches seeking repair permits or permission to expand have engaged in running battles with authorities, who have damaged and destroyed church buildings either in the course of urban or rural reconstruction or as a penalty for unauthorized construction. The Romanian Government has yet to allow a large Bucharest Adventist congregation to move into new, permanent quarters after the August 1986 razing of its church. The Pentecostal congregation in Bistrita continues the struggle to save its church, threatened with demolition after church leaders, having tried repeatedly and unsuccessfully to obtain official permission, tried to expand it without official clearance in July 1987. Congregants have staged an extended occupation to prevent bulldozers from advancing.

The Hungarian Catholic and German Lutheran Churches have become important cultural, as well as spiritual, refuges for minority members in Romania. Hungarians charge that the Hungarian Catholic Church is being encroached upon by Romanian-speaking prelates, although the latter have a far smaller community to serve. (Many ethnic Romanians who practice Catholicism today are in fact Eastern Rite Catholics, or Uniates, whose church has been banned in Romania since 1948).

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[16]FBIS-EEU-88-199, October 14, 1988, p. 19.

**Ethnic and Cultural Rights**

Some of the bitterest battles in East European history have been fought in the field of culture. This region, with its traditionally rich diversity of nations, has been rife with ethnic conflict, and the past 3 years certainly have seen their share. Two regimes, the Bulgarian and Romanian, have been prominently involved.

*THE BULGARIA PROBLEM.* Official silence surrounds the Bulgarian Government's treatment of its ethnic Turks, including the denial of this minority's existence. Since the brutal 1984-85 name-change campaign, the Bulgarian Government has been taking systematic measures to eradicate Turkish identity. For all practical purposes, activities pertaining to Turkish ethnic identity and Islamic religious practice are forbidden. Turks who have not changed their names are not permitted to work in state enterprises. There are increasing reports of ethnic Turks being forcibly resettled into non-Turkish areas of the country. Despite official denials, the use of the Turkish language continues to be banned. In many towns and villages the use of Turkish in public places, including the streets, is punishable by fine.

A formerly bilingual Turkish-Bulgarian publication has been available only in Bulgarian since January 1985. Turkish-language radio broadcasts have ceased. Receiving and reading of Turkish publications is punishable by fine, and radio and television programs from Turkey are jammed. Traditional Turkish clothes, most notably the traditional *shalvari* (wide pantaloons), have been prohibited in some areas in which there are large Turkish populations.

Few diplomats and journalists have been permitted to travel to ethnic Turkish areas since the campaign. Those journalists and diplomats who are permitted to visit do so only under heavy surveillance. In fact, the State Department reports, "Changes made in 1987 to the zone permanently closed to diplomatic travel expanded the closed areas along the southern and southeastern borders, where many ethnic Turks live."[17]

*THE ROMANIAN PROBLEM.* In Romania, President Ceausescu's brand of rabid nationalism is taking a toll on the Hungarians, Germans and other national minorities. They face diminishing opportunities to be educated in their own language and to maintain a culture separate from Romanian culture. Hungarian-language theaters and publishing houses have been shut down or merged with Romanian-language ones. In early 1988, the Romanian Government announced that only Romanian names could be used to designate geographical locations in Romania. This meant that minority-language publications were required to use these names. Family and cultural contacts across the Romanian-Hungarian border are hampered, and Hungarian visitors to Transylvania are harassed.

Official control over Romanian citizens' freedom of movement has resulted in the transfer of Hungarians through job assignments, for example, to predominantly Romanian areas, while Romanians are placed in formerly homogeneous Hungarian areas.

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[17]United States Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, OCTOBER 1, 1987-APRIL 1, 1988 (Washington, D.C.: Special Report No. 178), p. 16.

Ethnic Hungarians living in Transylvania told Helsinki Commission staffers last August that in effect the cities of Brasov, Cluj and Tirgu-Mures have been closed to in-migration by Hungarians.

By law, a minimum of 26 minority students is required to form a class taught in the minority language. But teachers proficient in minority languages are in short supply in the areas where the minorities are concentrated. Because the Government assigns graduates to places of residence, Hungarian- and German-speaking teachers often find themselves teaching in overwhelmingly Romanian areas, where Romanian is the only language taught.

In a 1987 interview, ethnic Hungarian activist Karoly Kiraly explained how there came to be such a dearth of Hungarian-language teaching in Romania:

> Hungarians with diplomas—teachers, doctors, scholars—were placed in jobs outside Transylvania or in Romanian-speaking territories. If they rejected these jobs they were unable to obtain any other work, and therefore had to reimburse the state for their tuition. Recently, they have been using this same strategy against teachers of the Hungarian language and literature if these teachers have qualifications in any other discipline—which most of them have. And so the circle closes.[18]

In recent months President Ceausescu has indicated he will step up his plan to eradicate 7,000 to 8,000 villages and replace them with large, modern "agro-industrial" conglomerates inhabited by former villagers by the year 2000. Up to 10 million people could be forced to relocate if the plan is implemented.

The projected destruction of centuries-old villages represents a full-scale attack on cultural rights. Homes, cemeteries and churches—all of which are imbued with historical significance for their communities, as well as providing the very framework of village life—are to be bulldozed. The Hungarian community is particularly distraught over losing another tie to its culture. Hungarians fear they will be dispersed and merged into communities of mixed ethnic character, perhaps far from their ancestral homes, further hampering their ability to preserve and transmit their heritage. The "agro-industrial center" campaign likewise will adversely affect other minorities, as well as ethnic Romanians.

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[18] East European Reporter, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1988), pp. 42-48.

# HUMAN CONTACTS

## Region-Wide Trends

East European performance in facilitating human contacts has improved over the past 3 years, with the exception of Romania's continuing poor performance on emigration. Yet each of the six East European regimes still falls short of its commitments under the human contacts provisions of the Helsinki Final Act and Madrid Concluding Document. These regimes remain the ultimate authority controlling emigration and travel, making it possible for them to base decisions regarding foreign travel on political rather than clearly defined legal grounds. In most cases, the regime maintains significant legal and bureaucratic impediments to emigration and travel. To varying degrees, the emigration process in Eastern Europe is characterized by arbitrary practices, bureaucratic roadblocks, cumbersome procedures and high fees. Above all, the image of an armed border guard, trained to fire at persons attempting to leave the country without regime permission, remains apt.

Hungary and Poland are least restrictive on emigration procedures, although even these relatively liberal regimes can refuse to grant exit permission for questionable political reasons. The Hungarian Government established new, liberalized regulations, effective January 1, 1988, on the issuance of passports valid for travel abroad. Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and Romania are considerably less liberal on emigration procedures across the board.

Opportunities for temporary visits abroad, particularly to close relatives, continue to increase in each East European country, but the process is much easier to accomplish in Hungary and Poland than in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and Romania.[1]

## Emigration and Family Reunification

Overall, the number of East Europeans permitted to emigrate to the United States and Western Europe has grown over the last 3 years, and the process of obtaining exit permission generally has become less burdensome. This encouraging trend unfortunately does not apply to Romania and has been uneven in Czechoslovakia.

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[1]Some of the information used in this chapter has been gleaned from the Department of State's semiannual reports, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Public Affairs). These reports to the United States Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe review compliance with the Final Act by the six East European States, as well as the Soviet Union, using a consistent set of norms, thus making identifiable trends discernible.

The increase in emigration has been particularly marked among ethnic Germans who reside in the German Democratic Republic, Poland and Romania. For example, the total number of ethnic Germans from these and other East European countries emigrating to the Federal Republic of Germany is expected to surpass 150,000 for 1988.

*BULGARIA.* Bulgaria's record on family reunification and emigration falls far short of its commitments under the Helsinki Final Act and Madrid Concluding Document but has shown improvement in the last 3 years.

The Bulgarian Government occasionally permits members of divided families to join relatives in the West, particularly if there has been pressure from Western governments. Recently, a number of prominent emigration and family reunification cases were resolved, including that of leading Bulgarian human rights activists Minka and Bozhidar Statev, following Commission and State Department interventions.

General emigration levels to the United States remain low (several dozen annually). There has been a modest but welcome increase in the number of family reunification and binational marriage cases resolved routinely, without U.S. Government intervention. Both the Commission and the Department of State currently list about 20 unresolved family reunification and family visit cases.

Emigration from Bulgaria is a complex process fraught with bureaucratic obstacles. A visa applicant encounters numerous problems when applying for a passport and an exit visa, both of which require a large number of supporting documents. Local officials process travel documents arbitrarily and issue exit visas only after a delay of months or years. Prospective emigrants are often denied promotions, new jobs, and educational opportunities.

A large number of family reunification cases between Bulgaria and Turkey are related to the Bulgarian regime's forced assimilation campaign against its Turkish minority. The Bulgarian Government, with minor exceptions, refuses to discuss the problem of ethnic Turkish emigration *per se*, or to permit the emigration of members of the Turkish minority, including many family reunification cases, despite the Turkish Government's stated willingness to accept them. At various times since World War II, Bulgaria and Turkey have reached agreement over the emigration of Turks from Bulgaria to Turkey, most recently in 1968, when from that year until August 1977, 60,000 ethnic Turks immigrated. Since then, ethnic Turks expressing interest in emigrating have been threatened with forcible resettlement to other parts of Bulgaria. However, during 1988 some 50 children whose parents had emigrated to Turkey were allowed to rejoin their parents.

The Bulgarian regime's announcement that liberalized laws governing foreign travel would be enacted in 1988 raised hopes that this new legislation would help resolve the problem of ethnic Turkish emigration. The new laws, however, did not materialize, and the generic problem of Turkish emigration still awaits resolution.

*CZECHOSLOVAKIA.* The Czechoslovak record on family reunification continues to be mixed but has shown some small improvement in the last few years. General emigration remains low. The

record on reunification of immediate family and parents is relatively good. On the other hand, Czechoslovakia's record on reuniting adult unmarried sons, daughters and siblings of U.S. citizens is poor. The Czechoslovak regime does not regard these categories of relatives as meriting reunification since, in its view, their basic family unit is in Czechoslovakia.

This position undoubtedly stems in part from the Czechoslovak policy of discouraging emigration of working-age citizens. Potential and actual members of the workforce frequently experience difficulty in obtaining exit documents and often must wait many years before receiving exit permission.

The cumbersome application procedure includes a requirement to obtain statements of "no objection" from local authorities. The average time for processing an emigration application is close to 3 months. In the event of refusal, an appeal can be filed within 15 days; after the second refusal, the applicant must wait 3 months before submitting a new application.

The largest expense for an emigrating Czechoslovak is often an education payment levied in theory to reimburse the Government for university and post-graduate education. Some applicants have had to pay in excess of the equivalent of $1,000, more than 3 months pay for the average worker.

Regime decisions on granting or denying exit permission are arbitrary and, according to the U.S. Embassy in Prague, seem to be as dependent on where the application is made as on the merits of the case. The situation for families of refugees from Czechoslovakia has improved slightly, however. They can expect waits of about 3 years, an improvement over the recent past, when a 5-year wait was the norm.

West German and Austrian residents living in the border area continue to report hearing gunshots from the Czechoslovak side of the border. Human rights activists in Czechoslovakia estimate that about 1,000 people are serving prison sentences for attempting to leave Czechoslovakia without official permission.

*GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.* The overwhelming majority of GDR emigrants go to the Federal Republic, where they are regarded as *Ubersiedler* (people who have moved over from one Germany to another) as opposed to *Aussiedler* (ethnic German immigrants from other countries). Western estimates of pending applications range from 300,000 to 500,000, although there have been unsubstantiated estimates in the FRG media that up to 10 percent of the GDR population has applied to emigrate. Nearly 30,000 East Germans were permitted to go to West Germany in 1988, surpassing the 1987 figure of about 12,700.

On January 1, 1989, a new GDR decree will go into effect relaxing restrictions on travel and emigration. The decree spells out several "humanitarian" grounds for emigration and establishes procedural guarantees which call for emigration authorities to "inform citizens, in writing and within specified deadlines, whether their applications to travel or emigrate have been approved."[2]

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[2]Robert J. McCartney, *East Germany Loosens Rules on Travel and Emigration* THE WASHINGTON POST, December 15, 1988.

GDR emigration practices nonetheless remain restrictive. Some exit visa applicants wait for up to 3 years for approval; some have faced reprisals, including loss of jobs and harassment of their children at schools. In addition, the German Democratic Republic severely limits access to United States and other Western missions, thereby inhibiting potential emigrants from making inquiries.

Individuals who attempt to leave the German Democratic Republic illegally are subject to imprisonment. In 1986 and 1987 there was a total of over 500 unauthorized border crossings. Some lethal barriers, such as minefields and automatic shooting devices, have been removed. At the same time, the GDR regime "has increased the height of the border fence to 3 meters, set up 150 kilometers of special dog-patrolled areas, and begun to expand its system of barriers on the inner-Germany border to a depth of approximately 20 kilometers."[3]

Orders by GDR border guards to fire on unauthorized border crossers reportedly were suspended as of the end of the summer of 1987. But in April 1988, shots were heard from the GDR side of the Berlin Wall on three occasions, and in September 1988 "shots were fired at two young men who were apparently attempting to cross the border at the Brandenburg Gate."[4]

*HUNGARY.* Hungary's emigration policy is relatively liberal, and its record on resolving family reunification cases is good. Emigration fees have been reduced significantly since 1984. Application for exit permission does not bring harassment and discrimination, as unfortunately still happens in other East European countries, notably Romania. Most applicants receive permission to emigrate on their first attempt; refusals can be appealed.

The number of pending family reunification cases involving the United States (about 100 Hungarian citizens immigrate to the United States annually) has not been high in recent years. Commencing in late 1982, the few problems that have arisen have for the most part been resolved expeditiously.

*POLAND.* Poland's emigration policy is also liberal by East European standards. Exit procedures were relaxed in July 1987, and further liberalization of passport issuance is expected in 1989. The vast majority of Polish emigrants come to the United States (about 2,000 annually), due primarily to the large Polish ethnic communities in this country. The new passport procedures have eliminated many immediate family reunification cases from the State Department's list of hardship cases. Three years ago, for example, the list contained some 200 cases; it is now down to fewer than 20.

*ROMANIA.* There has been little improvement in Romanian emigration practices and some retrogression in the family reunification record during the period under review. Yet, largely because of declining standards of living and increasing harassment, the number of emigrants from Romania is second only to Poland among all East European countries.

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[3]U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, COUNTRY REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS FOR 1987, 100th Congress, 2nd session (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1988) pp. 913-914.

[4]HAMBURG DPA, reprinted in FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE-WESTERN EUROPE-88-187, September 27, 1988, p. 5.

The Romanian regime continues to place bureaucratic roadblocks in the way of intending emigrants. As a result, large numbers of Romanian citizens have left illegally during the past year. In 1988 an estimated 20,000 citizens fled across the border or opted to overstay their authorized period of temporary stay abroad. The vast majority were ethnic Hungarians, although several thousand were Romanians. Border shootings have been reported, including one particularly heinous incident in the spring of 1988, in which a Romanian border guard reportedly pursued a fleeing Romanian citizen into Hungarian territory and wounded him fatally there.

The majority of Romanians who emigrate legally are members of the German minority who go to the Federal Republic of Germany. About 13,000 annually have received emigration permission since 1985. The FRG Government reportedly has been paying an average of DM8,000 (approximately $4,400) per ethnic German permitted to leave Romania. In addition, an annual average of 1,500 Romanian Jews has left for Israel since 1985.

Emigration to the United States is small and has declined in recent years from over 4,000 in 1984 to about 2,100 in 1988. According to a State Department semiannual report on CSCE implementation, "Family reunification has been delayed in some cases by a Romanian requirement that spouses living abroad who left Romania illegally must 'regularize' their status with the Romanian Government at a Romanian Embassy (i.e. renounce Romanian citizenship or receive approval for permanent residence abroad) before their family's application for a passport can be considered. This procedure can take up to several years and generally involves a fee of $80-$300."[5]

Romania enjoyed Most-Favored-Nation trading status (MFN) from 1975 until July 1988, when that status expired. In February 1988, Romanian officials informed the U.S. Government that their country would no longer accept MFN trading status subject to the terms of the Jackson-Vanik amendment. Prior to this announcement, both the House and Senate had attached language to a trade bill which would have suspended Romania's MFN status for at least 6 months. That language was deleted approximately 1 week before Romania's announcement.

Over 1,000 family reunification cases, including over 100 that involve nuclear families, remain unresolved between Romania and the United States. The Commission maintains a list of unresolved Romanian family reunification cases that it periodically presents to Romanian officials. About 60 percent of the Commission's cases have either departed Romania or received exit permission within the last year, a rate consistent with previous years.

### Binational Marriage

With the exception of Romania, the record of East European countries on binational marriages involving American spouses is generally good and has continued to improve in the last 3 years.

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[5]United States Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, APRIL 1, 1988-SEPTEMBER 30, 1988 (Washington, D.C.: forthcoming report, draft p. 93).

Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the the German Democratic Republic, Hungary and Poland appeared to be taking their Helsinki and Madrid CSCE commitments in this area more seriously in recent years—although performance on binational marriages has traditionally tended to be better than performance in the areas of emigration and travel.

As of September 30, 1988, there was a region-wide total of only 60 unresolved binational marriage cases involving the United States: 55 from Romania and 5 from the German Democratic Republic. Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland have no unresolved cases with the United States.

The Bulgarian and GDR regimes have generally positive records in resolving binational marriage cases, although, as noted, five U.S.-GDR marriage cases currently are unresolved. Despite the relatively long processing time for marriage applications (3 to 6 months), the Czechoslovak record is positive overall. On a few occasions in recent years, U.S. citizens of Czechoslovak descent, intent upon marrying Czechoslovak citizens, have been refused entry visas. Similarly, Czechoslovaks intent upon marrying Americans have been denied exit visas for this purpose.

The approximately 50 binational marriage cases handled each year by the U.S. Embassy in Budapest are essentially problem-free. The Polish regime's record on resolving marriage cases is also good, although it is easier for U.S. citizens to marry Poles in the United States than in Poland. For example, the waiting period in Poland for divorced Americans to receive permission to wed Polish citizens can extend up to 12 months.

Unfortunately, marriage to foreigners is officially discouraged in Romania and obtaining official approval from the Government has become more difficult. A wait of over 1 year for marriage approval is all too common.

### Family Visits and Travel

It has become somewhat easier for the average East European to travel abroad in non-emigrant status than it was 3 years ago and, in most cases, considerably easier than it was when the Helsinki Final Act was signed in 1975. The foreign travel and family visit picture is brighter in Hungary and Poland than in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and Romania. But even in the latter four countries the overall situation is slowly improving. Furthermore, new laws or decrees liberalizing travel have gone into effect in Hungary and the German Democratic Republic, and new laws have been proposed in Bulgaria and Poland.

*BULGARIA.* In February 1988, three committees of the Bulgarian parliament proposed legislation which seemed designed to bring Bulgaria into greater compliance with its Helsinki human contacts commitments. One bill would amend the citizenship law to permit Bulgarian citizens to obtain foreign citizenship without renouncing their Bulgarian citizenship. A second would permit those who leave the country legally and remain outside Bulgaria beyond the period specified by their exit visas to return without facing punishment. The third, and potentially most significant, would permit Bulgar-

ians to obtain a passport for travel abroad valid for a 5-year period. Although some Bulgarians reportedly received 5-year passports on an experimental basis during 1988, this legislation regrettably has been tabled indefinitely; it is not clear when, if ever, it will be enacted.

Bulgarians applying for permission to visit relatives in the West encounter a heavily bureaucratic and arbitrary system. Rarely are entire families allowed to travel abroad at one time, and political considerations are an important criterion in determining who receives permission to visit family members abroad.

*CZECHOSLOVAKIA.* Foreign travel continues to be controlled closely by the regime. Each private (as opposed to official) applicant must provide written permission from the applicant's employer and a certificate from the police. One bureaucratic requirement recently was eased, however. Prior to January 1988, persons desiring to visit "non-Socialist" countries were required to purchase hard currency from the state, and in fact had to submit an application in January of the year in which they intended to travel. New regulations went into effect in January 1988 enabling Czechoslovak citizens to receive hard currency from abroad, thus in many cases eliminating the need for prospective travelers to deal with the regime on this matter.

The number of Czechoslovak citizens given permission to visit relatives in the United States is currently about 8,000 annually and has been increasing over the past 3 years. It appears that the traditional profile of these visitors, largely retired and elderly, has been altered by the addition of more working-age people and of entire families, young members as well as old.

*GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.* The GDR regime eased travel restrictions significantly in 1986. Until then, essentially only men over 65 and women over 60 were given permission for private travel to visit close relatives. Since then, men and women of working age have been allowed abroad, and travel has been approved for visits to distant as well as close relatives. For example, in 1985 66,000 people under retirement age were allowed to make family visits abroad. In 1986 the number rose to 537,000. In 1987 the number was over 1 million[6] and in 1988, it rose to over 5 million.

Permission to leave the country must be obtained from one's employer, and unofficial sources report that such permission often is denied for political reasons. Many applications for travel are disapproved ostensibly to protect state secrets possessed by the applicant, yet the criteria for such denials have not been made public.

Some 60,000 GDR citizens must carry special identity cards (the "PM-12" card), which restrict foreign and in some cases domestic travel because of the bearer's criminal or political record.[7]

The latest signals from the GDR are promising. The September 1988 State Department semiannual report[8] cites evidence that

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[6]Dirk W. Rumberg, *Glasnost in the GDR? The Impact of Gorbachev's Reform Policy on the German Democratic Republic,* INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, Vol. 9 (May 1988), pp. 218-19.

[7]U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, COUNTRY REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS FOR 1987, 100th Congress, 2nd session (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1988), p. 919.

[8]United States Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, APRIL 1, 1988-SEPTEMBER 30, 1988 (Washington, D.C.: forthcoming report, draft p. 88).

some individuals previously refused travel permission on secrecy grounds have been allowed to travel abroad. Furthermore, the new January 1, 1989 decree relaxes restrictions on travel, expanding opportunities for citizens to visit the West for urgent family business. For instance, GDR citizens are now permitted to travel to the West to attend the funerals of more distant family members, whereas in the past, permission was usually granted to attend only the funerals of close relatives.

*HUNGARY.* Hungary's comparatively liberal policy on travel abroad has been further liberalized by the new passport law enacted in January 1988. Under this law, Hungarian passports are valid for an unlimited number of 90-day trips abroad, whether to the East or the West. Pensioners, and those working abroad and their dependents, may stay abroad longer than 90 days. The waiting period for a new passport is 30 days.

According to the Hungarian Ministry of Interior, some 600,000 new passports were issued in the first 3 months of 1988, and some 3.8 million Hungarians (about one-third of the country's total population) traveled abroad from January to June 1988. This marked a 70-percent increase over the same period in 1987.

The main constraint on foreign travel after January 1988 has been financial. Hungarian citizens traveling to the West are required to have a minimum of 3,000 forints in hard currency (approximately $60) but can exchange a maximum of 19,000 forints for hard currency in a 3-year period. Travel to the West is thus effectively limited to six trips every 3 years unless Hungarians travel as part of a tour group or on other funds outside the 19,000 forints which are permitted. Financial constraints are eased somewhat by a Hungarian policy allowing some airline tickets and hotel accommodations abroad to be purchased with forints.

Hungarian citizens are not required to obtain permission from their employers for travel outside the country, or even to indicate to the authorities the purpose of their trip. Hence, according to the September 1988 Department of State semiannual report,[9] "at least in theory, the Hungarian Government no longer restricts travel by Hungarians wishing to visit friends or relatives who are abroad illegally."

A small number of applications for new passports has been denied on "national interest" grounds. The most common reason for denial is the existence of a previous criminal record. This ground has been used against several individuals who participated in the 1956 uprising.[10] Denials are also made because of acts contrary to Hungarian law committed while abroad. This ground has been used against members of the democratic opposition. Indeed, in 1988 the most visible form of punishment for political dissent was denial of a passport.

The process appears to be arbitrary. Some human rights activists have been denied passports after having participated in activities

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[9]United States Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, APRIL 1, 1988-SEPTEMBER 30, 1988 (Washington, D.C.: forthcoming report, draft p. 87).

[10]In December 1988, the Hungarian Government lifted civil restrictions, including limitations on foreign travel, from 120 Hungarian citizens who had been sentenced to prison for their role in the 1956 uprising. These restrictions had been attached to the original prison sentences.

abroad deemed unfriendly to the Hungarian regime. Other activists suddenly have been granted permission to travel after previous denials.

*POLAND.* By all indications, the vast majority of Polish citizens applying for passports has been able to obtain them with little or no difficulty since liberalization of passport issuance was announced in the spring of 1987. During the 6-month period ending September 30, 1988, the U.S. Government issued about 56,000 visas for visits to family members in the United States, about double the number issued during the comparable period in 1987.

However, there continue to be a few individuals who are not permitted exit visas or passports for political reasons, usually on the grounds that the applicant might injure the interests of the state abroad.

Passport and exit visa procedures are still somewhat cumbersome. Applicants must obtain written permission for leave from their place of work or study and, for married applicants traveling alone, notarized permission from the spouse. Passports valid for travel to the West still are issued for a single journey only, although an increasing number of individuals are allowed to keep their passports rather than surrender them to the regime upon return to Poland.

*ROMANIA.* Despite difficulties and long waits in obtaining exit permits, an increasing number of Romanians are being permitted to travel to the United States to visit their families. In the 6-month period ending September 30, 1988, for example, 2,700 visas were issued by the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest to Romanian citizens for visits to relatives in the United States, more than twice the number issued in the comparable period 1 year earlier.

Passport issuance procedures are arbitrary and expensive. Among other requirements, permission to obtain a tourist passport must be obtained from regime-controlled "workers' committees."

### Travel and Tourism to Eastern Europe

As a general rule, all East European countries encourage foreign tourism as a source of hard currency, making it possible for foreigners to visit East- European relatives under the auspices of tourism.

U.S. citizens who visit Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia generally experience no difficulty other than occasional bureaucratic delays. A few are refused visas for political reasons. In the case of Czechoslovakia, U.S. citizens of Czechoslovak origin have been refused entry visas with no explanation, even if they had been admitted into the country previously. The Czechoslovak regime strictly enforces currency exchange and visa regulations, causing problems for tourists who fail to exchange sufficient money or allow their visas to lapse. In the past year, some persons desiring to attend independently-organized conferences have been refused visas to Czechoslovakia.

U.S. visitors to the German Democratic Republic can travel freely, except for areas near military installations. Travel and tourism in the GDR, however, is not without risk. According to the September 1988 Department of State semiannual report, "(I)t is

common (GDR) practice to demand high bail from foreign travelers arrested in the GDR and to impose more severe prison sentences on them than those imposed on East German citizens."[11]

Hungary actively promotes foreign tourism; in fact, in recent years the number of tourists visiting Hungary has exceeded the country's total native population. There are few problems in obtaining tourist visas and no currency conversion requirements. In the past several years Hungary has concluded agreements for reciprocal waiver of visitors' visas with several non-Warsaw Pact countries, including Austria, Finland and Sweden.

The Polish Government also actively promotes tourism, primarily from the United States, as a source of hard currency. The many American travelers to Poland generally experience no difficulty with local authorities.

Most Americans visiting Romania encounter no regime harassment, but the tight internal controls in that country have on occasion been felt by Western visitors. A few Western religious activists have been denied entry; others have been expelled for "impermissible activities" while in the country. Still others have had notes, film and other personal belongings confiscated by the authorities. A few foreigners visiting relatives have been interrogated by the police regarding their relationship to Romanian citizens, who are required to report all contacts with foreigners to the local police within 24 hours.

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[11]United States Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, APRIL 1, 1988-SEPTEMBER 30, 1988 (Washington, D.C.: forthcoming report, draft p. 106).

# CULTURAL POLICIES AND THE MEDIA

## Overview

Cultural and informational trends vary greatly throughout the East European countries, but one clear pattern emerges in the light of Gorbachev's emphasis upon *glasnost* and democratization in the USSR. Hungary and Poland, with the most progressive records in the fields of culture and information, have traditionally been far ahead of the Soviet Union in terms of the openness of their media and the latitude for independent cultural and intellectual activity. For these two countries, a Soviet policy of greater openness in public life has meant that the limits of the permissible have expanded, a development welcomed by the regimes as well as their citizenry.

In contrast, the authorities in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, and Romania have felt threatened by Soviet initiatives for greater openness, fearing such relaxation could lead to critical examination of their leadership that would in turn undermine their legitimacy. Their reluctance to follow the Soviet lead has led to situations of exquisite irony in which East European regimes have censored Soviet publications coming into their countries. More ominously, the "threat" of Soviet liberalization appears to have contributed to Romanian leader Ceausescu's determination to gain an even tighter grip on his country's intellectual and cultural life.

Apart from this general trend, one should commence a review of East European media and cultural policies by surveying the context for these policies in each of the region's six countries.

*BULGARIA.* The inconsistent, confusing approach of the Bulgarian Government toward informational and cultural issues probably reflects broad disagreements within the leadership over the preferable course and pace of reform. As in the economic and political spheres of Bulgarian life, cultural and media policies are often ill-formulated, and attempts at reform are frequently abandoned. Hence, despite calls for the creation of a new cultural climate and occasional small steps toward liberalization, the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) has actually done little to encourage greater openness in the media or the arts.

*CZECHOSLOVAKIA.* The state of affairs in Czechoslovakia is particularly disheartening because it is probably the East European country that has experienced the greatest relative decline in its cultural life during the postwar era. Before World War II, democratic Czechoslovakia was a land of artistic and intellectual accomplishments that placed it firmly in the European tradition. Since the Soviet-led invasion of 1968 and extending essentially to the

present, under the leadership of one of Eastern Europe's most conservative regimes, the country's intellectuals and artists have been continual victims of persecution, and significant cultural life has endured only because of the valiant efforts of a small number of underground activists.

Artists and intellectuals who had participated in the pre-invasion Prague Spring, were removed from positions of influence, and had to go underground if they wished to continue their cultural activities.

Despite unrelenting government harassment and persecution, Czechoslovakia's artists and intellectuals have maintained an impressive breadth and depth of activity. In recent years, though, as Hungary, Poland, and the USSR have loosened restraints on cultural activity, the Czechoslovak authorities have attempted to tighten their control over this sphere because they realize that any truly free public discourse would inevitably lead to critical examinations of the suppression of the Prague Spring.

Therefore, as Polish and Soviet officials begin to call for examinations into the "blank spots" of their respective histories, the Czechoslovak regime continues to thwart any critical examination of Czech or Slovak history. As a result of this hostile and defensive government posture, Czechoslovak culture has experienced a general stagnation; the efforts of small but determined underground intellectual circles have not been able to overcome such systematic repression.

*GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.* The German Democratic Republic has traditionally been one of the more repressive East European countries in terms of its official policies regarding culture and the free flow of information, but this tendency has been mitigated somewhat by the country's history and its strategic location in Central Europe. In particular, the relationship with the Federal Republic of Germany has led the German Democratic Republic to view favorably the exchange of peoples and information between the two Germanies. Unfortunately, this openness has not been mirrored in the GDR's approach to cultural and media issues in a domestic or East-West context.

Nevertheless, the two-way flow of East and West Germans is notable for its breadth and scope. The exchange of environmentalists, church activists, and writers, to name a few categories, has produced a qualitatively and quantitatively impressive exchange of information and experience. This has been buttressed by FRG television and radio broadcasts, both of which can be widely received in the German Democratic Republic. Experts estimate that between 80 and 90 percent of the East German population can receive West German television, while 100 percent can listen to radio broadcasts, which are not jammed by the Government.

The ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED) sees the role of the media as fostering belief among the population in the desirability of the present form of government and the social and economic system it has created. Traditionally, the regime has kept a steady watch over information coming from the West, countering it with its own versions of the news. Lately it also has had to keep as careful a watch to the East. In the face of Moscow's emphasis on reform, the GDR

regime has attempted to use its media to present information supporting an anti-reformist line.

An interesting recent development has been the movement by the GDR's Evangelical Church to fill the vacuum left by the regime in the cultural realm.

*HUNGARY.* A greater degree of cultural and artistic expression is tolerated in Hungary than in the other Warsaw Pact states. As a general rule, ethnic minority rights in this area do not pose a significant problem. Most of these minority groups, including Croats, Germans, Romanians, Serbs, Slovenes, and Slovaks, have their own native-language newspapers, and some are able to have their children educated in their native language.

Hungary's information and cultural policies have been relatively liberal, but continued forward movement in the openness of the Hungarian media has tended to complement a policy of cracking down on independent writers and publishers in Hungary. The regime evidently has viewed a more open media as one way of preventing Hungarians from seeking independently published materials. The most notable issue is the plight of the Hungarian minority in Romania. While those who wrote or printed articles on this topic in unofficial publications were often harassed, the Hungarian official media has become more open in discussing the problem.

The same trend applies to coverage of economic problems in Hungary, as well as of the treatment of the unofficial writers and publishers themselves. In March 1988, for example, the official Hungarian press began to report its version of incidents involving domestic opposition in order to counter reports on this topic by Radio Free Europe and other foreign radios.

*POLAND.* Poland continues to be home to one of the most vibrant intellectual communities in Eastern Europe, although the Government currently exerts greater control over academic and cultural activities than it did during the Solidarity era of 1980-81. While foreign language materials are often difficult to obtain, this is probably due as much to a shortage of hard currency as to restrictive government policy. The official Polish press reflects a wide range of opinion on political and social issues, outstripping the candor permitted the press in Hungary, the only other East European country that approaches the degree of openness found in Poland.

Poland's intellectual and cultural life is particularly noteworthy for the flourishing underground press and independent publishing houses. Despite repression, the underground press continues to be the most extensive and professional of any existing in Eastern Europe. As for the independent publishing houses, an estimated 50 of them have produced hundreds of periodicals and books in circulations of 2,000 to 2,500 copies each, a production feat unthinkable elsewhere in the Warsaw Pact. In addition to reading material, unofficial sources produce tapes and videocassettes, calendars, and postcards.

*ROMANIA.* Romania continues to stifle the free flow of information and ideas in the media and the arts but has been unable to suppress unofficial artistic and intellectual expression. The regime seeks to exercise total control over the dissemination of informa-

tion in the country by severely limiting the opportunities of both the domestic and foreign media to cover events in Romania. The regime also places strict control on the inflow of foreign news as well, relying heavily on material from Socialist news agencies. Foreign radio broadcasts, however, are not jammed and are an important source of domestic and foreign news.

The tight controls applied to the media are also applied in the cultural sphere, producing a stultifying effect on Romanian artistic achievement. The fact that any creative work continues to see the light of day is a tribute to the perseverance of Romania's writers and artists, some of whom have managed to continue working despite Government censorship and harassment. Repression, however, has taken its toll. The country is not noted today for its cultural accomplishments; indeed, many Romanian cultural figures in the West contend that Romanian cultural life itself is in Diaspora.

It is helpful in discussing Romanian cultural life to distinguish three interrelated aspects of the problem. These involve: regime policies aimed at inhibiting independent artistic and intellectual expression; regime policies aimed at building a cultural legacy that channels nationalistic sentiment into innocuous, state-approved art forms such as folk dancing; and the cultural life that people manage to maintain between these two spheres of official activity. The first and third are discussed in this section. The second is considered at the end of the chapter.[1]

The Romanian regime tightly controls independent expression. While formal pre-censorship is required only for plays, other artistic and intellectual activities are censored in a more indirect but still effective manner. Thus, the authorities will cite a shortage of paper as the rationale for limiting the number of works a writer can produce; paper is somehow found for writers who follow the official line, and particularly those who write of President Ceausescu in glowing terms. The impact of censorship can perhaps be most clearly seen in the sad state of Romanian historical research, which some analysts believe "remains tied to the party's continual and sometimes fantastic reinterpretations of the country's past."[2]

Not all regime attempts at repression of independent expression have been successful. One of the more notable examples of an unofficial voice making itself heard is the continued survival, despite efforts to stifle it, of the monthly journal 20TH CENTURY, the last Western-oriented stronghold among Romanian writers. 20TH CENTURY, by East European standards, is a daring journal of literature, the fine arts, film, music, and theater which has published the works of foreign authors and even prominent Romanian exiles. Although some elements of the regime wanted to suppress it by replacing its editorial board, this action was fought by the Writers' Union, with the apparent support of other party members. 20TH CENTURY continues to be published, albeit with tremendous delays, and its contents remain wide-ranging.

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[1]Based on information received from Vladimir Tismaneanu, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Philadelphia.

[2]*'Blank Spots' in the History of Soviet-East European Relations,* BACKGROUND REPORT/69 (EASTERN EUROPE) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, April 22, 1988).

Another example of independent expression was the 1987 publication of EPISTOLAR, a collection of 50 essays and letters by 14 leading thinkers from different generations, which galvanized the country's intellectuals. Including reflections on the ideological disaster in contemporary Romania, the book is a passionate plea for the defense of eternal classical values as well as a manifesto for the idea of Romania belonging to Europe. It even presents Marxism as a victim of the regime. For these reasons, the Party's ideological artillery has been directed against the book.

A third example of unsuccessful regime efforts to suppress an artist was its failure to discredit writer Octavian Paler, the former head of the Journalists' Union and former editor of FREE ROMANIA, the country's second most influential newspaper. Paler managed to publish a novel, critically assessing the current situation in Romania. The regime attempted to discredit Paler by organizing "discussions" in factories, collective farms, and other common work settings. The campaign failed because people simply refused to cooperate. As a result, Paler is still being published and is using his public forum to make statements about the proper role of the writer, which, he says, is clearly not to be "the king's clerk."[3]

**Media Policies**

*BULGARIA.* Despite some liberalization of governmental restrictions, the Bulgarian media remains under strict regime control. Censorship and self-censorship are prevalent. The regime permits criticism by the media only when it serves regime goals, such as exposing corruption among mid-level bureaucrats.

In what many observers consider to be a blow to fledgling efforts at liberalization, party leader Zhivkov has criticized Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) attempts at greater openness, particularly in the media. His views were expressed in April 1988, when the Bulgarian Politburo issued a document setting forth principles for "reconstruction" of the Bulgarian intellectual sphere. According to Radio Free Europe analyst Simon Simonov, the document's authors "had in mind the fact that some Bulgarian intellectuals, in their hurry to follow the Soviet lead, had criticized past and current policies of the regime, forgetting that in the USSR the Party had used the previous leaders as scapegoats, while in Bulgaria, where the leadership has remained the same for more than 30 years, there were no suitable people to blame."[4]

The July 1988 BCP Central Committee Plenum on restructuring in the intellectual sphere did, however, adopt measures on the role of the press which criticized the "lack of sufficient guarantees to defend journalists and editorial boards from the state and public organs . . ."[5] However, the measures passed by the plenum were undermined by the failure to accompany them with detailed proposals for changes in the mass media. Radio Free Europe summed up the situation by noting that "the main problem facing Bulgar-

[3]SITUATION REPORT/17 (ROMANIA) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, May 26, 1988).
[4]SITUATION REPORT/4 (BULGARIA) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, May 27, 1988).
[5]SITUATION REPORT/8 (BULGARIA) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, August 12, 1988).

ia's process of structural reform remains the failure to implement policies."[6]

Liberalization of the media is further complicated by the regime's failure to set definitive limits of the permissible. Although the media has been urged to establish a "new style of thinking," those who stray beyond the undefined boundaries have been dismissed from the party or fired from their positions. For instance, authorities had encouraged more critical reporting of the economic issues, but "as soon as Bulgarian TV began singling out cases of mismanagement, it came under fire from the party daily RABOTNICHESKO DELO."[7]

There have been some recent instances of greater openness in the Bulgarian media. A December 4, 1987 OTECHESTVEN FRONT interview with Lech Walesa portrayed him in a negative light but accurately stated Solidarity's views on political, social, and economic pluralism. The media have also discussed Bulgarian reform policies and given candid analyses of social ills such as crime, drug addiction, AIDS, teenage alienation, and, at least until recently, environmental problems.

In July 1988, prominent Bulgarian journalist Baruh Shamliev attacked the lack of openness in the Bulgarian media in NARODNA KULTURA, the weekly of the Committee on Culture, "which has served as the mouthpiece for intellectuals wishing to overcome stagnation in social and cultural life."[8] Besides criticizing the Government's secrecy and excessive control of information, Shamliev argued that officials who try to set limits on freedom of expression "were opponents of 'restructuring,' for under genuine self-government the working people should have the right to express their opinion freely on all issues."[9]

*CZECHOSLOVAKIA.* The Czechoslovak regime's cautious attitude toward the free flow of information and ideas is clearly indicated in its media policy. Censorship is pervasive. Sensitive subjects such as the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia must be treated in accordance with regime policy. In August 1988, on the 20th anniversary of the invasion, neither critical commentary nor demands for an open examination of the topic appeared in media coverage. This muzzling of the press contrasts sharply with the liberalization in Poland and the Soviet Union, where, ironically, the press covered the calls of various Soviet citizens for a reexamination of the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The Czechoslovak Government does not jam Voice of America broadcasts and recently announced that it will cease its heavy jamming of Radio Free Europe transmissions.

Czechoslovak press coverage of the West and foreign affairs is highly polemical, and the regime greatly restricts the public's access to information from the United States and Western Europe. No American publications are sold openly in Czechoslovakia, with

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[6] *Ibid.*
[7] William Echikson, *Why Reform Moves Slowly in Bulgaria,* THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, February 25, 1988.
[8] SITUATION REPORT/7 (BULGARIA) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, July 29, 1988).
[9] *Ibid.*

the exception of a small number of copies of the U.S. Communist Party newspaper, DAILY WORKER.

In 1983, the Government decreed that payment for periodical subscriptions from "non-Socialist" countries could no longer be in Czechoslovak crowns but must henceforth be in convertible currency. This directive, combined with high customs duties on films and printed materials, has made it exceedingly difficult for Czechoslovaks to acquire Western printed materials. In contrast, information from other Socialist states is readily available.

*GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.* GDR media policies were somewhat liberalized following Party leader Erich Honecker's trip to Bonn in September 1987, during which he committed the German Democratic Republic to improved performance in this area. Subsequently, new legislation was passed which has facilitated the importation of non-political books, newspapers, and magazines. Echoing this new law, last summer's SPD-SED joint declaration included support for the idea of selling Western newspapers publicly in the German Democratic Republic.

The impact of the new law is weakened by a clause prohibiting the distribution of "literature directed against the preservation of peace or containing other agitation, contravening of the interests of the Socialist state or its citizens."[10] It appears, however, that the regime has taken a broad-minded attitude toward the restrictions and has not, in fact, been making extensive use of them.

In terms of the GDR's media treatment of the Federal Republic of Germany, GDR television carried live coverage of most events that occurred during Honecker's trip to the Federal Republic. NEUES DEUTSCHLAND, the Party newspaper, printed the full text of several speeches given by Chancellor Kohl, including passages affirming the FRG's commitment to German reunification and calling for an end to the shootings at the border and for greater human rights.

The GDR's media policies toward domestic and foreign affairs are extremely rigid, with the regime maintaining strict control over what information is disseminated. William Drozdiak wrote in the March 29, 1988 edition of the Washington Post that, "East German officials contend that their society, situated along the fault line of the East-West divide, already receives a broad range of information and opinion from abroad and does not require any further expansion of political expression at home."[11]

The media is allowed to be critical only on those issues that serve the regime's interests. Although the party has been reassessing some aspects of German history, it has been unwilling to engage in self-criticism, in contrast to current Soviet practice, nor has it allowed any questioning of official history by other segments of society. Criticism that non-party members are occasionally permitted to voice is not given wide publicity; in contrast to the Kremlin's recent policy of allowing publication of critical debates, there

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[10]United States Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, OCTOBER 1, 1987-APRIL 1, 1988, (Washington, D.C.: Special Report No. 178), p. 41.

[11]William Drozdiak, *Moscow's Allies Pressed to Adopt "Glasnost"*, THE WASHINGTON POST, March 29, 1988.

was no media coverage of criticisms that were leveled at the state during the GDR Writers' Congress.

As noted, the party's repressive attitude toward the media has led it to part ways occasionally with Moscow, to the point that the GDR has sometimes censored Soviet Secretary General Gorbachev's speeches and prohibited the delivery of Soviet-printed materials. In March 1988, the GDR did not deliver three issues of the German-language Soviet periodical NEUE ZEIT to subscribers because they included controversial excerpts from a Soviet play about Lenin.

In November 1988, GDR authorities were moved to ban altogether the Soviet youth magazine, SPUTNIK, which, according to NEUES DEUTSCHLAND, "no longer makes a contribution to the consolidation of German-Soviet friendship. Instead, it is providing distorted depictions of history."[12] The November issue of SPUTNIK had carried an article reassessing the relationship between Hitler and Stalin, which amounted to blasphemy in the GDR context.[13] Moreover, the rehabilitation of Soviet revolutionaries (e.g., Bukharin) in Moscow has gone unmentioned in the central East German press.

The GDR's censorship has also extended recently to various religious organizations. On April 18, 1988 the authorities turned down an appeal from Protestant Church leaders to lift censorship of four church newspapers and a Protestant news service. Four of the publications were barred from appearing because they included articles on church discussions of emigration and travel issues. A fifth was suppressed because it included a report affirming the Church's right to play an active role in society. Such incidents of censorship have been rare in the past, leading many observers to conclude that the regime's action signaled a worsening of its relations with the Church.

While the regime permitted the Lutheran and Catholic Churches to hold their first-ever joint ecumenical conference in February 1988, it attempted to pressure the Church papers into printing expurgated accounts of the critical discussion of some public issues. On the other hand, there was extensive media coverage of the massive Lutheran *Kirchentag* (Church Day) in Berlin and the first-ever country-wide Catholic Assembly in Dresden, at which numerous issues were discussed in a frank and critical manner unusual for public debate in the GDR.

Another encouraging sign has been a wider public discussion of social problems. Newspapers now carry more information on crime, long a taboo subject in the German Democratic Republic, as well as on homosexuality, which was once regarded as criminal deviation but is now viewed more sympathetically. Nevertheless, numerous subjects are still off-limits to the media, including some that seem rather puzzling to a Westerner. For example, it is illegal in the German Democratic Republic to publish water-quality data. This secrecy appears to stem from embarrassment over the extent of the country's pollution problem and concern that valuable strategic in-

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[12]Quoted in Serge Schmemann, *The Germanies' Political Divide is Being Blurred by Glasnost*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, December 18, 1988.

[13]*Ibid.*

formation on the GDR's industrial capacity could be gleaned from the data.

*HUNGARY.* Hungary, along with Poland, has the region's best record regarding media and information policies. This relatively liberal approach can be traced back to the late 1960s, and has continued, despite periodic setbacks, to the present day.

Jamming of foreign radio broadcasts has been absent, although there were reports in 1985 of interference with a Radio Free Europe broadcast of an interview with Andras Hegedus, who was Hungary's Prime Minister in 1956. Given Hungary's geographical location, broadcasts from the West can be heard by a considerable portion of the population.

Satellite technology has made particularly deep inroads into Hungary. It is estimated that over 100,000 Hungarian homes are now receiving Western television broadcasts through satellite dish systems. Community-level efforts to provide television reception via satellite have been particularly successful.

The Hungarian media have cooperated with the Voice of America (VOA) and U.S. Information Agency (USIA) on several projects in recent years. In 1984, for example, Hungarian television began producing a documentary about VOA, which was aired in 1987. VOA officials noted the evenhanded treatment of VOA by the Hungarians. In June 1988, Radio Budapest and VOA cooperated in a jointly hosted program in which experts in Washington and Budapest debated several sensitive issues, including the 1956 Revolution and the fate of Imre Nagy. Radio Budapest did not air the program in its entirety, but the program was advertised in advance so that listeners could learn when VOA would broadcast the full discussion. Another example of cooperation was the Hungarian television/USIA joint program on *Nutrition and Health* in November 1987.

Western magazines and newspapers can be purchased with local currency but are not widely circulated. Their availability increased noticeably during the Cultural Forum in Budapest in the fall of 1985. Prior to that time they could be purchased only in major hotels; however, they were subsequently put on sale at kiosks. They have been available to individuals by subscription for sometime, but their cost serves as an impediment to wider circulation. Occasionally, editions of Western periodicals regularly sold in Hungary do not appear if they contain articles considered too sensitive, such as a 1985 edition of the American monthly NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, which focused on Afghanistan. Since the fall of 1985, a Hungarian edition of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN has been published in Budapest and has a circulation of about 35,000.

The U.S. Embassy library in Budapest maintains copies of the INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, the Sunday edition of the NEW YORK TIMES, USA TODAY, and a number of magazines. Numerous Hungarians, particularly young people, take advantage of the Embassy library, and these patrons are usually not harassed by the Hungarian authorities, although there are occasional reports that individuals have been warned to stay away from the library.

The Hungarian media are relatively open in reporting internal events. Social problems and disasters are covered, although they

may not always include the full picture, especially if that picture would lay blame on the one-party system or the highest levels of the Hungarian leadership.

The Hungarian media generally follow the Soviet line on foreign policy issues. Rather than directly criticizing the United States, however, the traditional practice has been to quote the Soviet news agency, TASS, on East-West issues. In recent years, representatives of the U.S. Government have been able to present U.S. views directly. For example, interviews with U.S. Ambassadors Warren Zimmerman (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe Follow-Up Meeting in Vienna) and Steven Ledogar (Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions), Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead, and others have recently appeared on Hungarian television and radio and in official newspapers.

The growing openness in the official press has been accompanied in the 1980's by a crackdown on independent writers and publishers, as noted earlier. The relaxation in the media fits into this effort to suppress independent writing because the regime hopes that a more varied and interesting official press will decrease the demand for independently published materials.

For the most part, self-censorship is the rule in Hungary. With the boundaries of the permissible expanding, there are times when those at the forefront of that expansion, cross the line. In 1986, the journal TISZATAJ was closed down completely because of political errors, including the publication of a poem on the events of 1956 by Gaspar Nagy, who was forced to resign from the Writers' Union 1985 for the content of his poetry.

The Hungarian regime sought to define for the first time the notion of freedom of expression with a press law that went into effect on September 1, 1986. This was the country's first comprehensive law under Communist rule on matters relating to the press. Previously, the freedoms of speech and the press were guaranteed, "consistent with the interests of socialism and the people," in section 64 of the Constitution, but they were left to courts, lacking the power of judicial review, and administrative agencies to define. The law, according to Politburo member Janos Berecz, "does not contain more limitations than the internationally accepted minimum, and it even satisfies the demands expressed in the Helsinki Accords, calling for the free flow of information."[14]

The law contained some liberal features, such as provisions requiring more unclassified information to be released to the public and allowing appeal of a rejected application to publish a book. Overall, however, the law allowed for, if not justified, continued actions against independent publishers. Government approval is still needed to publish and is given only to recognized organizations. The authorities can prevent dissemination of information that threatens Hungary's vaguely-defined constitutional order, public morals, or international interests--that is, relations with the Soviet Union or possibly the Hungarian minorities in neighboring countries.

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[14]MAGYAR HIRLAP, March 21, 1986, reprinted in JOINT PUBLICATION RESEARCH SERVICE - EASTERN EUROPE-86-078, May 22, 1986.

*POLAND.* The candor and breadth of the Polish media far surpass that of the other East European media, including Hungary. On international issues, there is a delicate interplay between the Polish media and the regime. Although the media largely hew to the official line, a surprising degree of latitude exists, allowing some prominent Polish journalists to provide factual coverage of various controversial international topics, particularly East-West issues such as arms control.

Even controversial "East-East" issues can be aired. For example, the Polish media reported Parliamentarian Ryszard Bender's call for an examination into the highly emotional and heretofore taboo issue of the Katyn Forest Massacre of 4,000 Polish officers by the Soviet Union in 1940. This openness in the Polish press contrasts significantly with the absence in the Czechoslovak press of any reevaluation of the 1968 Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia on the 20th anniversary of that event.

The media's relations with the regime seem to have improved in recent years following the lifting of martial law. Hence, many journalists who resigned or were dismissed during martial law are working again in a variety of smaller-circulation but widely read publications.

It is also worth noting that in RES PUBLICA, Poland had the first officially sanctioned independent journal in Eastern Europe. In October 1986, the editors of RES PUBLICA, a clandestine quarterly that began publication in 1978, received permission from Polish authorities to operate legally. RES PUBLICA does not represent the church or a particular human rights organization. Its editorial policies are similar to those of Western journals publishing materials reflecting a wide spectrum of ideas and beliefs.

Press censorship is practiced in Poland, but there is a process of give-and-take between the press and the censors. While Conservative Party and Government officials would like to see the media strictly adhere to the regime line, the prevailing tendency is for editors and censors to engage in hard bargaining in order to reach a mutually agreeable position. As a result, although the media must engage in self-censorship, controversial articles are sometimes published and overt regime interventions have become less frequent. This decentralized control of the media has permitted the Polish press to satisfy the demands for conformity by reprinting media commentary from other East European countries or by refraining from overt criticism of official policy, as opposed to giving the regime enthusiastic backing.

The most significant change in Polish television has been the coming of the satellite era. Together with Hungary, Poland appears to realize that it must learn to adapt to satellite television and to use it for its own ends. Hence, the regime has begun individual licensing of parabolic antennas and announced in February that 2,100 authorizations have been issued for satellite dishes. Largely as a result of small-scale production, several thousand Poles are now receiving Western satellite television. The Polish Government also reached an agreement with Italy's Government-operated RAI television network to rebroadcast the full schedule of RAI's first channel programming, much to the delight of the Polish public.

The availability of direct satellite reception in Poland will remain limited for a long time due to the difficulty of acquiring the requisite equipment. Poland manufactures limited quantities of receiving equipment, some of which it exports. The cost of importing the needed equipment is extremely high and is likely to remain so in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, satellite technology has made significant inroads into Poland and doubtless will continue to develop as an important channel of communication.

The Polish Government announced in January 1988 the cessation of all jamming of Western broadcasts. Routine monitoring confirms that presently there is no jamming of Voice of America or Radio Free Europe, but it should be noted that jamming of Western radio from the territory of Poland stopped several years ago. The jamming that ceased in January was being conducted by the Soviets from Soviet territory.

While printed matter from other Warsaw Pact countries is readily obtainable, it is often difficult to acquire Western newspapers, periodicals, and books; however, this is probably as much a function of the lack of hard currency as of ideological restrictions. In fact, Poles have greater access to foreign materials than other East Europeans, but government control of hard currency renders it exceedingly difficult for individuals to subscribe to Western publications. Many Poles get around the hard currency problem by receiving subscriptions that have been purchased abroad on their behalf.

Few Western books or periodicals are sold at newsstands, although the INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE is sometimes available in tourist hotels. American weekly news magazines can be found in some public reading rooms, and occasionally secondhand bookstores have books published in the United States. The lack of hard currency severely limits the number of Western periodicals and books that university and public libraries can afford to purchase. On the other hand, the Western publications already in library collections are freely available for public use.

*ROMANIA.* Ceausescu's Romania continues to maintain the most repressive approach toward media and informational issues of any East European country. As with other aspects of Ceausescu's rule, some of his policies in this area are highly erratic. For example, although Romania severely limits the amount of printed information that leaves and enters the country, foreign radio broadcasts are not jammed. Western news media are not distributed publicly; however, articles from Western publications are sometimes reprinted in the Romanian media.

For the most part, however, Ceausescu retains tight control over the media. The highly limited coverage of the June U.S.-Soviet Moscow Summit presents a striking example of this tight control, "In Rumania . . . there was little television and radio coverage of the summit meeting, and newspaper reports were limited to terse dispatches from the official Soviet press agency Tass."[15]

The regime does not allow printed material from the West to be sold to the general public, although party and government elites

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[15]John Tagliabue, *East Bloc Reacts to Summit: Much Praise, Some Criticism,* THE NEW YORK TIMES, June 3, 1988.

and some academics are given limited access to some Western publications, particularly technical ones. In a move reflecting the growing tension between Romania and Hungary, the Romanian Government has banned, since January 1, 1988, the importation of all Hungarian newspapers and other publications.

Because of Ceausescu's austerity program, Romanian television airtime is limited to about 21 hours a week, as of fall 1988, to save electricity.

**Treatment of Foreign Journalists**

*BULGARIA.* Working conditions for Western journalists have recently improved somewhat in Bulgaria. Most notably, Western journalists are gaining greater access to high-level officials. Foreign journalists are still discouraged from visiting ethnic Turkish areas, except through tours organized by the official press agency. Nevertheless, in February 1988 foreign journalists were permitted to visit the prison on Belene Island and talk to prisoners there, among whom were many ethnic Turks imprisoned for protesting the regime campaign to replace Turkish names with Bulgarian equivalents.

*CZECHOSLOVAKIA.* Western journalists often receive poor and inept treatment from Czechoslovak authorities. Even accredited journalists are not granted multiple-entry visas, and foreign correspondents often have difficulty in obtaining access to government officials.

Foreign journalists were harassed by Czechoslovak security forces on several occasions in 1988. The most recent incident occurred on September 24, 1988, when the Reuters correspondent accredited to Czechoslovakia was assaulted by plainclothes police in the course of covering a demonstration in Saint Wenceslaus Square. The journalist, after being told by the police to stop taking notes, was still attempting to do so when he was assaulted by a police officer, who forcibly seized his notes and then, in a separate action, deliberately broke the journalist's thumb. As the correspondent was an American citizen, the incident was formally protested by both the American and British Embassies.

On August 20, 1988, the eve of the 20th anniversary of the Soviet-led invasion, a VOA correspondent was detained for about 90 hours on the pretext that false accreditations had been found in Prague. The American Embassy protested this episode.

Another serious incident in recent years took place on March 25, 1988 in Bratislava, during a demonstration for religious freedom. The police detained, for several hours, journalists covering the event, and at least one reporter was physically assaulted while incarcerated. The police also interrogated the journalists about their Czechoslovak contacts. These incidents demonstrate the extent to which the Czechoslovak authorities are willing to go in order to exercise control over reporting on their country.

*GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.* GDR officials have, for the most part, been courteous and efficient in their dealings with foreign journalists. The foreign correspondents are, however, hampered in the discharge of their duties by GDR laws which restrict

travel without prior permission and the ability to make appointments directly with GDR officials and individuals. This generally good record was marred by an incident in June 1987, when GDR police interfered with West German correspondents reporting on the scene at the Brandenburg Gate where several hundred East Germans, trying to listen to a rock concert taking place on the other side of the Wall in West Berlin, were harassed and interrogated by security forces.

*HUNGARY.* The Hungarian record in handling foreign journalists is generally good. Journalists normally do not experience difficulties in obtaining visas or in bringing equipment into the country. Multiple-entry visas for journalists were approved in 1982. Journalists have sometimes been denied visas because their activities were viewed as potentially hostile to the regime. The official press center, Pressinform, has received favorable comments by the foreign journalists whom it assists.

In late 1985, during the 6-week CSCE Cultural Forum, a Radio Free Europe correspondent was permitted to enter and report from Hungary for the first time. In 1986, a Public Broadcasting System television crew spent 6 weeks in Hungary taping a special on the 1956 Revolution and its effects on Hungary 30 years later. The crew experienced no difficulties. In addition, Hungary saw its first resident American correspondent since 1956 when Henry Kamm of the NEW YORK TIMES arrived, although his entry into the country in January 1987 was marred by the confiscation of his notebooks by customs officials at the border. His materials were later returned along with apologies for the mistreatment he received.

There have been other instances when journalists have had their materials confiscated, such as those who were covering an attempted wreath-laying ceremony commemorating the 1956 Revolution. These materials were also returned with apologies for excessive police vigilance. For the most part, however, journalists have not been prohibited from engaging in their work.

*POLAND.* The Polish regime's policies toward the foreign press are less restrictive than those of other East European regimes, with the notable exception of Hungary. Poland is noteworthy for the access it gives foreign correspondents to Government officials, as well as for the weekly press conferences conducted by the government spokesperson, where spirited discussion often takes place.

*ROMANIA.* Romanian treatment of foreign journalists is uneven, particularly in terms of granting visas. Some journalists experience little difficulty in acquiring them while others are subjected to arbitrary delays. The visa policy appears to be based on the principle of retribution. Thus, a journalist applying for a visa to Romania for the first time will rarely encounter difficulty, whereas, one who has previously published articles critical of the country will often face problems in obtaining a second visa.

In advance of and during Gorbachev's April 1987 visit to Romania, several correspondents from Western news organizations were denied entry into the country. During 1988, three Western correspondents were expelled from the country by the authorities for "activities not compatible with their visa status." Following those episodes, a U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT correspondent was ar-

rested and later expelled from the country in mid-September of 1988.

Other continuing problems for Western journalists working in Romania include the increasing difficulty in gaining access to high-level Romanian officials and the limits on travel around the country, which are non-existent in theory but quite severe in practice. Journalists, however, are often able to circumvent Government controls by using public transportation or rental cars.

**Cultural Policies**

*BULGARIA.* Public discussion of *preustroystvo* (restructuring) in Bulgaria has been subject to the same limitations as those applied to the press. In November 1987, for example, four Sofia University professors were dismissed from the party for publicly demanding political and economic democratization at a University conference.

Only limited progress has been evident on the literary front. Several fiction and nonfiction books dealing with politically sensitive topics have been published in the last few years, but some of these have been subjected to hostile ideological campaigns.

In late March 1988, Evtin Evtimov, editor-in-chief of the relatively outspoken LITERATUREN FRONT, was relieved of his duties. Among the more venturesome articles published in the LITERATUREN FRONT was a lengthy piece by respected historian Toncho Zhechev, in which he called for a critical reexamination of recent Bulgarian history. Zhechev argued that an open discussion of the 40 years of Communist rule in Bulgaria was a precondition for the realization of the broad goals set at the July 1988 plenum. This idea evidently contradicted the prevailing official Bulgarian view that greater liberalization was a product, not a precursor, of restructuring.

The recent publication of two books by prominent Bulgarian satirist Radoy Ralin offers a promising exception to the general repressive trend in the arts. The books contain essays which lampoon bitter truths about life in Bulgaria.

In education, as elsewhere, there has been some rhetoric but few changes, although strict disciplinary standards instituted in secondary schools in 1985, which had imposed an unpopular dress code and an evening curfew, were withdrawn in December 1987.

One of the most disturbing developments to occur anywhere in Eastern Europe has been the Bulgarian Government's attempt to assimilate forcibly the country's sizable Turkish minority by eradicating all signs of its native culture, language, and religion. This onslaught on a people's identity is covered in detail in the "Respect for Human Rights" section of this report, but it should be noted here that Bulgaria's attempt to exert total control over this group's cultural expression is matched in its sweeping extent and tragic results only by Romania's *sistematizare* (systemization) program.

*CZECHOSLOVAKIA.* Czechoslovakia's cultural life is haunted by the legacy of 1968. Many individuals who were purged after the suppression of the Prague Spring have yet to be "rehabilitated" and are still discriminated against in their fields of employment. Thus, aside from the general censorship of artists and writers, this

additional barrier exists for many formerly prominent individuals. That so much intellectual life takes place in small underground circles, is a tribute to the perseverance and courage of those individuals who pursue independent cultural activities.

There have been several recent examples of government repression of independent cultural or intellectual activity. On November 27, 1987, the police in Plzen stopped a rock music concert. Everyone present had to show their identity cards to the police, who also confiscated some films and cassettes. One individual who had the temerity to ask to see some police identification was thrown to the ground and struck repeatedly in the face by the police. Later, he was ordered to pay a fine.

The independent citizens' initiative Committee for Defense of Persecuted (VONS) reports that: "On May 21, 1988, the *samizdat* magazine VONKO (THE WINDOW) opened its third exhibit on the Strelecky Ostrov in Prague. . . . There were several dozen pictures and other artifacts exhibited and about 250 people visited the exhibit. The police were present in greater numbers and forced the closing of the exhibit in about an hour. Several citizens had to identify themselves."[16] Similarly, in July the Government broke up a peace forum, expelling more than 40 foreign guests who had traveled to Czechoslovakia to attend the meeting.

Czechoslovaks who have attempted to have contact with westerners have also been subject to harassment by the regime. In particular, members of the unofficial Association of Friends of the USA (SPUSA) have been targeted for persecution in the form of employment bans, interrogations, and general harassment. Furthermore, although the Czechoslovak regime does not directly hinder the functioning of the American Embassy library in Prague, Czechoslovaks are clearly deterred from coming to the building for fear of future harsh reprisals by their Government. Thus, contact with foreigners can be risky for Czechoslovaks.

In November 1988, the regime used a new tactic to control an independently organized historians symposium. Foreigners were permitted to travel to Prague, but the Czechoslovak organizers and participants were detained for the duration of the proposed conference.

Independent underground groups have tried to fill some of the gaps in cultural life that result from the Government's restrictive policies. For example, independent publishing houses have supplied translations of some Western books which would otherwise be unavailable. Independent journals also try to provide information and discussion of issues not found in the official press.

One of the newest independent journals is LIDOVE NOVINY (NEWS OF THE PEOPLE), which first appeared in 1988. Another noteworthy example of independent publishing is STREDNI EVROPA (CENTRAL EUROPE), a self-published journal reflecting "opinions of the traditional right wing in Czech intellectual thought."[17] Begun in 1984,

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[16]Report from VONS, the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted, May 27, 1988, translated by Mrs. Anna Faltus.

[17]SITUATION REPORT/16 (CZECHOSLOVAKIA) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, November 3, 1987).

the journal "rejects not only reformism but also some of the beliefs and views associated with the mainstream of Czech dissent."[18]

There have been two noteworthy examples of public protest of restrictive government policies. The first occurred on November 18, 1987, when 1,083 people signed a letter to the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Culture, and the General Assembly of the CSSR. Among other things, the letter called for the release of Karel Srp, head of the Jazz Section, who at the time was serving a prison sentence for his efforts on behalf of the nonpolitical music appreciation club, whose persecution by the Government has been deplored worldwide. The letter, which also urged the restoration of the Jazz Section's activities and an end to the persecution of SPUSA, challenged the regime "not to stand in the way of real artists and to stop crippling human intellect, talent, and will."[19]

A second public protest was undertaken by the writer Vaclav Havel, who sent a letter to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe Vienna Review Meeting on November 28, 1987. Havel complained about police confiscation of books and other printed matter and the irreparable loss that results because such materials are never returned:

> I see this as a longstanding war of vandalism against Czech and Slovak culture. War with national culture is, in many other words, a war with the very spiritual identity of a nation. Many people may not realize that—and that is the reason why this inconspicuous war is the more dangerous.[20]

Havel's eloquent message provides an apt summary of the current state of cultural affairs in Czechoslovakia, where many of the country's most gifted people are engaged in a struggle with the authorities for the soul of their troubled land.

*GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.* The cultural sphere has shown more vigor than other areas of life in the German Democratic Republic. In terms of historical research, Radio Free Europe analyst Barbara Donovan reports:

> For well over a decade the East German regime has been reassessing German history and has accepted as 'progressive traditions' a number of historical events and figures previously denounced as bourgeois or counter-revolutionary. In this sense, the SED has long been moving to fill in a number of its own blank spots.[21]

However, Donovan also observes that there has been no reappraisal of the history of German communism, because that would inevitably lead to questioning of the party. Thus, in this critical area of self-examination the GDR is also lagging behind Moscow.[22]

As for the literary world, the State Department 1987 COUNTRY REPORT on the GDR human rights record states that:

> Publishing houses practice self-censorship and works must receive official clearance before they are published, performed, or exhibited. Some works are banned completely. Others may be published only outside the country,

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[18] *Ibid.*

[19] Report from VONS, the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted, November 27, 1987, translated by Mrs. Anna Faltus.

[20] Vaclav Havel, *Open Letter to CSCE Vienna Review Meeting,* November 28, 1987.

[21] Barbara Donovan, *'Blank Spots' in the History of Soviet-East European Relations: The German Democratic Republic,* BACKGROUND REPORT/69 (EASTERN EUROPE) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, April 22, 1988).

[22] Ibid.

> under contracts negotiated by state-run agencies, and some are permitted to be published, performed, or exhibited in the GDR only in edited form.[23]

East German writers, however, are becoming increasingly radicalized and are speaking out against censorship. WASHINGTON POST correspondent Robert J. McCartney comments that,

> One sign of a shift in thinking was an unusually strong set of appeals for an end to censorship at the government-backed Writers' Conference in November . . . East German intellectuals unleashed some of the strongest criticism ever of restrictions on freedom of expression. Prominent novelist Christopher Hein made a bitter attack on censorship, saying it was 'illegal,' 'outdated' and 'hostile to the people.'[24]

Christa Wolf, an anti-militarist and "semi-dissident" writer, exemplifies another dimension of this radical perspective in her call "for unilateral disarmament by the Warsaw Pact countries first to test the sincerity of the West."[25]

*HUNGARY.* Hungary permits a broad range of cultural and artistic expression and is particularly noteworthy for its tolerance of minority culture. Because minority groups comprise only a small percentage of the population, recognizing different customs and languages is a less explosive issue in Hungary than in other East European countries, such as Bulgaria and Romania, which have sizable minority populations.

The range of tolerated activity for artistic expression in Hungary is considerable and has expanded in recent years. There are occasionally instances, however, when artists go beyond what officials will tolerate. Art exhibitions, such as those of the independent *Inconnu* group of artists, have sometimes been banned or broken up by the police, including exhibitions located in private apartments.

Cultural and educational cooperation with the United States has expanded in the past 3 years. Since June 1987, the number of individuals involved in United States-Hungarian exchanges has increased dramatically, especially in light of additional funding from private organizations such as the Soros and Ford Foundations. As a result of a new cultural agreement negotiated in 1987, bilateral exchanges will expand further. In addition to the increase in official exchange programs, there has been a significant expansion of informal contacts.

*POLAND.* Although many areas of Polish cultural life are notable for their depth and breadth, it is the independent publishing houses and the underground press which continue to be leading forces in the country's cultural and intellectual life. Other manifestations of independent cultural life include self-education groups, poetry readings, art exhibits, and theatrical performances. Recently a group calling itself the "Orange Alternative" has emerged in the city of Wroclaw. Specializing in political satire, the group has attracted audiences of up to 2,000 for its street performances.

Official publishing houses continue to issue translations of Western authors, but much of what is now appearing in print was con-

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[23]U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES FOR 1987, 100th Congress, 2nd session (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1988), p. 917.

[24]Robert J. McCartney, *East German Reformers Await Leadership Change,* THE WASHINGTON POST, January 3, 1988.

[25]Martin Sieff, *East Germany Bans Bard, But His Song Wafts Over the Wall,* THE WASHINGTON TIMES, February 5, 1988.

tracted for several years ago before the lack of hard currency became such a pressing problem. In the future, a combination of lingering censorship and the scarcity of hard currency will probably lead to a significant decline in the number of Western books, films, and periodicals available in Poland.

As mentioned earlier, a significant improvement in Polish cultural life occurred on August 1, 1988, when the Government decided to allow the Polish chapter of the International PEN Club to resume its activities. The executive board of the Club was suspended by the Government in 1981, following the imposition of martial law, and subsequently was dissolved in 1983. The primary reason for the regime's action was the organization's insistence on maintaining its independence from the Government. The authorities claimed that PEN had been taken over by "anti-Government and anti-Socialist" elements sympathetic to Solidarity. The Government then appointed a "special temporary board" to direct the organization. PEN members in Poland and abroad refused to deal with this Government-sanctioned body.

The Government's willingness to reinstate the Polish chapter of PEN resulted largely from the original executive board's determination to retain its statutory mandate in the face of official harassment. The decision may also "reflect the authorities' belief that some concession to independent intellectuals might lend credibility to their assurances that they intend to democratize government."[26]

The regime's fairly lenient attitude toward independently organized international conferences offers perhaps another indication of a relaxation of ideological restrictions since the lifting of martial law. The Government allowed a conference on world peace to be held in Warsaw in 1987, and, more recently, one on human rights to take place undisturbed in Krakow during the height of the summer 1988 wave of labor unrest.

In contrast to this ostensibly more liberal policy toward intellectuals, since 1985 the Polish regime has stepped up its campaign against the independence of Poland's traditionally outspoken academic community. Several damaging amendments to the law on higher education were passed, and punitive actions were taken against academics prominent in the opposition. In late 1985, 70 rectors and deans were dismissed from their administrative posts, although they retained their teaching responsibilities. As recently as February 1988, 13 members and 23 associates of Warsaw's prestigious Academy of Sciences wrote an open letter charging that party-imposed political controls were jeopardizing the quality of Polish scholarship and international educational cooperation.

Official cultural policy toward Polish minorities has been described as "benign neglect." In recent years, particularly following the release of French filmmaker Claude Lanzmann's documentary *Shoah,* which examines Europeans' awareness of and attitudes toward Hitler's program to exterminate European Jewry, there has been considerable public discussion of Poland's Jewish heritage. However, the only official endeavor underway is the opening of the

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[26] SITUATION REPORT/15 (POLAND) (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, September 16, 1988).

Institute for the History and Culture of Jews at the Jagiellonian University.

*ROMANIA.* Two aspects of Romanian cultural life, regime repression and independent activity, were examined in the opening section of this chapter. This section looks at regime attempts to develop cultural activities that support its rule, namely, the *sistematizare* (systemization) program and the "Song to Romania." It will also look briefly at the Romanian Writers' Union, which plays a unique role in Romania's cultural life.

The Writers' Union has neither completely succumbed to the repression of the regime nor succeeded in maintaining an independent stance vis-a-vis the regime. The Union's statutes are democratic and include elections by secret ballot. This makes it impossible for the regime to install its own candidates; instead, the Union has been forced into dormancy. Hence, the Union has not had a congress since 1981, even though it was scheduled to convene one in 1985.

Two of the most far-reaching attempts by the Romanian Government to control cultural life in Romania are the *sistematizare* and the "Song to Romania" program. The *sistematizare* program constitutes an all-out effort at social engineering whose aim appears to be the destruction of all remaining vestiges of Romania's pre-Communist history. To achieve this goal, Ceausescu has mandated the wide-scale destruction of thousand of urban monuments, including churches and single-family homes, and at least 15,000 buildings in the historic parts of Bucharest have already been destroyed.

In the countryside, *sistematizare* has an even greater potential to destroy the lifestyle known by Romanians for centuries. The WALL STREET JOURNAL reports that, "In the countryside, smashed hamlets and villages are making way for the same prefabricated housing blocks of Orwellian Bucharest."[27] Under *sistematizare*, Ceausescu intends to raze as many as 8,000 villages, ostensibly to free up more farmland and improve the rural standard of living. But Dinu Giurescu, a prominent Romanian historian who emigrated to the United States in 1988, comments that: "The ultimate goal is the proletarianization of our society. The final step in this process is the loss of the individual house."[28]

Ceausescu intends to consolidate all of the peasantry in "agro-industrial" centers where they will live in government-owned and controlled apartments where kitchens and bathrooms are communal space. Because the peasantry is already forced to work on collective farms, this next step of compelling families to live in collective settings effectively destroys the only refuge left to them; that is, their private homes and individual plots of land. Ceausescu wants to reduce the number of Romanian villages from 13,000 to as few as 5,000, and he has already set the bulldozers to work at this remarkable task.

The *sistematizare* project has galvanized the Romanian intellectual community, part of which has decided to take a stand on the urgent need to protect Romania's cultural legacy from the sense-

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[27]Manuela Hoelterhoff, *Romania's Restructuring: No Perestroika*, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, May 19, 1988.
[28]*Ibid.*

less destruction unleashed by Ceausescu. Indeed, intellectual opposition has coalesced around this single issue, which has generated increasing levels of activity against the destruction of churches, monasteries, and other buildings in Bucharest. One of the most notable events in this struggle was undertaken by Dinu Giurescu and historian Adrian Pippidi, grandson of Romania's greatest historian, Nicolae Iorga. Mr. Pippidi and Mr. Giurescu sent an open letter of protest to the President of the Republic, which was read over the air by Radio Free Europe.

The second major state-formulated program is the "Song to Romania," which has been described as an attempt to de-professionalize artistic activities in Romania. In actuality, this "deprofessionalization" of the arts seems to be a bald attempt by the regime to establish a central organization that will have control over all cultural activity in the country.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's, the Government built houses of culture in all of the provinces. These cultural centers were under the control of the regime, which sought to use them to inculcate in the country's youth confidence and trust in the party and its programs. Romanian youth, however, went to the centers for dances, film screenings, and other leisure activities but rejected the regime's indoctrination efforts. Authorities, looking for a new way to assert control of cultural life, came up with the "Song to Romania" concept.

The "Song to Romania" program is an integral part of the regime's attempt to mold a Romanian culture that corresponds to the regime's image of appropriate cultural activity; that is, cultural forms that appeal to Romanians' nationalistic feelings without leading them to question the regime's control of society. Consequently, the centers intend to foster the development of innocuous activities, such as folk dancing, and to compel all Romanians, regardless of background, to participate in these state-approved activities. In a country gripped by austerity measures, the funds needed to build the cultural clubs will surely cut deeply into the resources allocated to the cultural sphere.

Conversely, artists and intellectuals who continue to engage in independent endeavors will continue to be subject to the panoply of repressive measures currently employed by the Romanian authorities against independent-minded citizens.

It is a tribute to the indomitable spirit of Romanian intellectuals that some areas of independent cultural activity have managed to continue in the face of these heavy-handed government intrusions into cultural affairs. It must be noted, however, that many Romanian intellectuals have responded to official pressure to bring their work in line with the regime's goals by leaving. As a result, there is a sizable community of Romanian emigre intellectuals in the West. In the final analysis, the migration of the country's elite is probably the most telling comment on the tragic results of Ceausescu's determined effort to eliminate what remains of independent cultural and intellectual life in his country.

# CONCLUSION

This report has examined the record of reform and human rights performance in Eastern Europe, in the context of Soviet-East European relations and Mikhail Gorbachev's reform initiatives. The report shows that events in the Soviet Union comprise only one of many factors influencing developments in Eastern Europe. From the outset, each of these countries has started at a different point as a result of past reforms, or the lack thereof, and both the pace and actual direction of reform efforts differ from country to country. Furthermore, the perceived need for reform is different in each capital, and the results vary accordingly. In some cases (Hungary and Poland) it is quite far-reaching; in others (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and the German Democratic Republic) it is, at best, extremely uneven; and in Romania it sometimes appears that time is marching backwards.

Add to this the ethnic, cultural, religious, and historical diversity of the region, much of which is now becoming more visible after 40 years of being repressed, and the prospective divergence resulting from current reform efforts takes on an even larger dimension. "To generalize about 'Eastern Europe' was always a difficult and questionable exercise . . ." argues British journalist Timothy Garton Ash, "but it becomes ever more difficult and questionable as individual countries become increasingly different, not just from the Soviet Union but from each other."[1]

This divergence, however, should not overshadow the existence of shared traits. Despite substantial modifications in some East European countries, all still maintain the basic elements—both political and economic—of the system imposed on them in the immediate post-war period. As a result, the "precise configuration of political and economic pressures may differ in each country, but their longer-term problems are strikingly similar."[2] Moreover, when contrasted to the greater divergence between these countries and the countries of Western Europe, including the two German states, many of the differences between the East European countries themselves seem smaller.

Thus, in addition to developments within the Soviet Union itself, the following factors have had a significant impact on the political and economic climate west of the Soviet Union:

- developments in the relationship between the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe;
- the economic crisis in the region;

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[1]Timothy Garton Ash, *The Empire in Decay*, THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS, September 29, 1988, p. 53.

[2]Janusz Bugajski, *The Bird in Moscow's Cage: Eastern Europe and Perestroika*, THE NATIONAL INTEREST, Summer 1988, p. 68.

- a general improvement in East-West relations;
- leadership changes in Eastern Europe;
- trends in East European societies;
- the influence of the West.

Judging from the record of the past 4 years, these factors should facilitate further reform and liberalization in Eastern Europe in the next several years. While Soviet influence will remain considerable, Gorbachev's approach to reform and liberalization in the Soviet Union promises to foster similar policies in the other Warsaw Pact countries. Gorbachev's relatively pragmatic approach to Soviet-East European relations, as well as to East-West relations, should allow East European regimes considerable leeway to workout solutions to country-specific problems.

Region-wide economic difficulties will push in the direction of reform of both economic and political systems. Leadership changes in Eastern Europe—particularly in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, and above all Romania—could remove major barriers to further reform and liberalization. Trends in East European societies vary greatly from country to country but in their aggregate show a decrease in passive acceptance of regime policies, a corresponding increase in unofficial articulation of social, economic, and political concerns, and a growing awareness of shared interests in the region and beyond.

Opportunities for enhanced Western influence should grow, and at a minimum the United States and its allies should follow East European events closely during this potentially volatile period.

This Commission believes it important to view reform and human rights in Eastern Europe in the context of the Helsinki process. Most of the period under review in this report has coincided with the Vienna Review Meeting, which began in September 1986. During this meeting, the human rights violations of East European regimes have received closer scrutiny than, perhaps, at any previous CSCE meeting.[3] In this respect, the policy of differentiation has been given life: liberalization and progress in some countries have been duly noted, while stagnation and regression elsewhere have been appropriately condemned.

While clearly a great deal remains to be accomplished, there have been significant improvements in several areas closely monitored in Vienna. For example, all of those countries (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland) which jammed foreign radio broadcasts at the start of the Vienna Meeting have stopped as of this writing, and almost all of them have liberalized both their practices and their policies regarding some aspects of human contacts, such as emigration and family reunification.

To the extent that the political line in Moscow has liberalized, the Vienna Meeting has afforded both Governments and non-governmental organizations alike the opportunity to challenge the Soviet Union and its allies to translate those words into deeds. During the next 3 years, several CSCE follow-up activities will be held, some of which will specifically focus on human rights and

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[3]See, for example the Plenary Statement of Ambassador Warren Zimmermann, Chairman of the United States Delegation to the CSCE Follow-Up Meeting, *East European Observance of CSCE Commitments*, June 28, 1988, Vienna, Austria.

human contacts. Those meetings will provide much needed fora to continue the examination of the unfolding events in Eastern Europe described in this report, and to continue the challenge undertaken in Vienna.

The Helsinki process has proved to be remarkably flexible and has evolved beyond many people's expectations. It can and should continue to be used as a means of focusing attention on the human rights situation in Eastern Europe.

# APPENDIX I

## Helsinki Commission Hearings on Eastern Europe Held During the 99th and 100th Congresses

1988

- *The Current Situation in Poland,* September 23
- *Politics of Pollution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (on the Second Anniversary of the Chernobyl Disaster)— Parts I and II,* April 26
- *East European Perestroika: United States and Soviet Foreign Policy Options,* March 15

1987

- *Changing U.S. Attitudes Toward Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union,* October 28
- *Gorbachev, "Glasnost," and Eastern Europe,* June 18
- *Religious Intolerance in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union: Field Hearing in Philadelphia,* May 29
- *National Minorities in Eastern Europe: The Hungarian Minorities in Romania and Czechoslovakia,* May 5
- *National Minorities in Eastern Europe: The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria,* February 3

1986

- *Soviet and East European Emigration Policies,* April 22
- *Human Rights and the CSCE Process in Eastern Europe,* February 25

# APPENDIX II

## Helsinki Commission Delegations to Eastern Europe

1988

***Delegation to Poland, April 6 - 9***

*Members included:* Helsinki Commission Chairman Steny H. Hoyer, Representatives Donald L. Ritter, Kweisi Mfume, E. Clay Shaw, and Gerry Sikorski

1987

***Delegation to the German Democratic Republic, October 8 - 13***

*Members included:* Helsinki Commission Chairman Steny H. Hoyer, Senator Timothy E. Wirth, Representatives Benjamin Cardin, Jan Meyers and Lawrence Smith

***Delegation to Romania and Bulgaria, August 28 - September 4***

*Members included:* Helsinki Commission Chairman Steny H. Hoyer; Senator Frank Lautenberg; Representatives Bill Richardson and Jim Moody; Ambassador Richard Schifter, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs and Helsinki Commissioner; Ambassador Sam Wise, Deputy Head of the U.S. delegation to the Vienna Follow-up Meeting of the CSCE and Helsinki Commission Staff Director

***Delegation to Czechoslovakia, February 15 - 17***

*Members included:* Helsinki Commission Chairman Steny H. Hoyer, Representatives Christopher H. Smith, Benjamin Gilman, and Albert Bustamante

1986

***Delegation to Hungary, November 12 - 13***

*Members included:* Helsinki Commission CoChairman Steny H. Hoyer



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